

A SAGA OF SRI SATGURU JAGJIT SINGH JI

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*S*ri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji

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A Brief Biography in English

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First Online Edition: August, 2017

Number of Pages: 3 + 284

Price: Not Applicable

ISBN 978-1-63535-567-3

Published by: Vishav Namdhari Sangat
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*S*ri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji

Dr. Sharada Jayagovind



*Vishav Namdhari Sangat
Sri Bhaini Sahib
Ludhiana, Punjab*

Acknowledgments

- Satguru Uday Singh ji
- Mata Chand Kaur ji
- Bibi Gursharan Kaur
- Sant Jagtar Singh
- Biba Sahib Kaur
- H. S. Hanspal
- Swaran Singh Virk
- Rachhpal Singh Sewak
- Harpal Singh Sewak
- Sant Balkaar Singh
- Sant Surinder Singh Namdhari
- Jagdish Singh Waryam , Editor, “Waryam”
- Dr. Narinder Pal Singh (Thailand)
- Dr. G. L. Awasthi
- Jugdiep Singh, Managing Director, Satguru Partap Singh Hospital
- Jai Singh and Preetam Kaur
- Ujjal Kaur
- Sant Nishaan Singh
- Ustad Harbhajan Singh, musician
- Sukhwinder Singh Pinky, musician
- Balwant Singh, musician
- Kirpal Singh, musician, UK
- Harjinder Singh, musician
- Mahinder Singh Purba
- Ajit Singh Namdhari
- Master Amrik Singh
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- Baljinder Singh, former captain of Namdhari Hockey XI
- Kawaljeet Kaur, Thailand
- Suba Satnam Singh, Australia
- Narinder Singh, Mombasa
- Harbhajan Saluja
- Sulakhan Singh, UK
- Suba Harbhajan Singh, Ludhiana
- Paramjit Singh Neote, Ireland
- Kuldeep Singh Chana, Southall, UK
- Gurmeet Singh Birdi, USA
- Taranjiet Singh, Mumbai
- Karanpal Singh, Mohali
- Gurmukh Singh, President, All India Namdhari Vidyak Jatha
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- Buta Singh, Hyderabad
- Surat Pal Singh, Photographer



Dedication

*This book is dedicated with reverence to
His Holiness Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji
who has been the beacon of light and hope
for millions of devotees.*



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REFLECTIONS

When I begin to reflect upon my life and how it has unfolded, I draw two conclusions. The first one is, a divine energy has silently guided me on to a certain path independent of my own thoughts and plans. Secondly, I realise that divine guiding power to be Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.

The following verses from the Gurbani hold true for me:

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਤਾ ॥

Tun mera Pita, tuhai mera Mata.

You are my Father, You are my Mother.

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਬੰਧਪੁ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ ॥

Tun mera bandhap Tuh mera bharata.

You are my friend, You are my Brother.

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਰਾਖਾ ਸਭਨੀ ਥਾਈ ਤਾ ਭਉ ਕੇਹਾ ਕਾੜਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

Tun mera rakha sabni thai ta bhao keha kara jio.

**When you have me under your protection everywhere,
why should I fear.**

ਤੁਮਰੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਤੇ ਤੁਧੁ ਪਛਾਣਾ ॥

Tumri kirpa te tudh pachhana.

You have blessed me so that I can understand You.

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰੀ ਓਟ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਣਾ ॥

Tun meri ot tunhai mera mana.

You are my sanctuary and my honor.

I feel fortunate that I was born during the era blessed by Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. He preached the philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev Ji in its purest form. Satguru ji was constantly absorbed in *naam simran* and was an epitome of truthfulness. He carried out tireless *seva*, displayed unconditional love and compassion and promoted peace. He was so content throughout His life, that He was in a constant

state of bliss. He remained an active advocate of the teachings of the *Gurbani* and promoted its principles and practices throughout His life. He remained detached from the perils of ego, anger, jealousy, greed and other worldly attachments.

In a quest to share the life and message of such a great Satguru beyond the sphere of Namdharis, we envisioned the difficult task of compiling His immeasurable contribution through a biography. As destiny had pre-ordained, a good friend of mine, Prashanta Bhat, came to my mind and through him we were introduced to his aunt Dr. Sharada Jayagovind, to whom we entrusted the writing of this biography in English.

As she began this journey, we spent a lot of time reflecting on Satguru Ji's life and felt elated. Here was a Satguru whose greatness could only be felt but difficult to be expressed in words. I realize that without personally developing this devotion, faith and love, it would have been an incredibly difficult task to capture the true essence of Satguru Ji's life journey in this book. Incidentally, we found such a person in Dr. Sharada. She understood the true essence of faith, where love and devotion are not bound by any religious confinements. As she walked on this journey, she developed the same devotion and love towards Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji as any devotee.

ਸਤਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਤਿਸ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ॥

Sat Purakh jin jania Satgur tis ka nao.

He, who has realized the Lord, can be called the true Satguru.

ਤਿਸ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਿਖੁ ਉਧਰੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਉ ॥

Tis kai sang sikh udhrai Nanak har gun gao.

In the Satguru's company, singing God's praise His disciples are saved.

Growing up in Sri Jiwan Nagar and Sri Bhaini Sahib around Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji, I never realised how fortunate I was. Whenever He addressed me as *Beta* (Son), the importance was beyond my understanding. He showered upon me so much of love that subconsciously I was drawn in to His aura.

Satguru Ji often took me along with Him on some of His travels. Looking back and remembering those years I realize how Satguru Ji gracefully and happily

adapted to shifting situations and circumstances. Many a time the houses and places He graced were in remote villages, some with basic thatched roof structures, and others with no basic amenities. Thousands shared their problems and sorrows with Him and remarkably He remained attached to each person yet detached enough to provide comforting solutions to them. As He went about showering His blessings, he always remained happy, no matter what the situation or condition of His surroundings were. His mere presence brought unlimited joy to His disciples that is beyond description.

Most of those days began in the early hours of the morning, usually between 3 am and 4 am with the singing of hymns from the *Gurbani - Asa di Vaar kirtan* along with *naam simran* as a standard practice. Thereafter, He would continuously travel, visiting houses and placating His disciples before retiring to bed between 10 pm and 11 pm. It was His presence that radiated the energy and even ordinary mortals around him did not feel tired. If He returned from these visits early, Satguru ji would immerse Himself in *Sangeet*, His other passion.

I recall that whenever I bowed at the feet of Satguru Ji, many times Mata Chand Kaur Ji would also be present. Usually bowing down to someone else in Satguru ji's presence is not a common practice. However, Satguru Ji always asked me, "Have you met your mother?" and often would instruct me, "Go and touch the feet of your mother." Mata Ji made selfless service the focal point of her lifelong journey. My first memories of her as a child was someone who was always busy with some form of community work, be it supervising construction, helping in the preparation of *langar* (community kitchen), washing used utensil or simply making *rotis* for hours during busy festivals. She was totally immersed in one form of service or another and this determination of serving others inspired thousands more to join in. She practised the same simplicity that Satguru Ji desired, lived a selfless life and gave a mother's love to all. Ultimately, her contribution and sacrifice for this *panth* will always be remembered as supreme.

The first important responsibility which Satguru Ji assigned to me was to develop the farm at Gola Gokarnath, Uttar Pradesh. I was just about twenty years old and had no experience in managing a farm. I was not very keen to go to that remote place with limited facilities and the nearest town was at least one hour away.

Fortunately, we were raised in an environment where faith in the divinity of Satguru Ji was firm and there was no question of disobeying His *Hukum*. I undertook the responsibility and moved to Gola Gokarnath.

Satguru Ji never let me feel lonely and periodically graced the farm with His visits and abundant blessings. He would always be accompanied by a large number of people, including many musicians. Namdharis from nearby farms would also come and soak in His divine *darshan*. He set an example for us by living a life of simplicity and austerity many a time, not hesitating to join us on the farm to work alongside other Sikhs in various tasks such as weeding sugarcane. Satguru Ji was equally content and indifferent to travelling on a bullock cart or in expensive cars. Along with this simplicity and humility, *Gurbani* and *naam simran* were central to His daily routine. His mere presence in this underdeveloped region brought about a transformation. Through His blessings, over a period of four years, this Gola farm developed into a model farm and was projected as a benchmark for neighboring farmers.

At the end of these four years, Satguru Ji asked us to host the *Hola Mahalla* festival at Gola Gokarnath, which is one of the most prominent events in the calendar and has the largest gatherings of Namdharis. So far it was held in Haryana or Punjab, close to where most of the *Sangat* live. Organizing this important festival in Uttar Pradesh was a huge challenge. We were expected to cater to the needs of accommodation and food of thousands of disciples. A special train with Sikhs started from Ludhiana and thousands of Namdharis from elsewhere also gathered at Gola Gokarnath. This was probably the largest gathering of Sikhs in this region at the time; locals had never witnessed a Sikh gathering and organization of this magnitude. On the final day, Giani Zail Singh Ji, the then Home Minister along with Rajiv Gandhi Ji visited and received blessings from Satguru Ji. Having the courage and ability of hosting and organizing an event of this magnitude in an undeveloped and isolated area of India was only possible because of the blessings of Sri Satguru Ji.

In marking the success of both this important festival and the development of the farm, Satguru Ji immediately instructed me to move to Namdhari Farms, Bidadi in Karnataka. Satguru Ji's actions are mysterious and no one understands the depth of

His vision. At the time when they had asked me to move, many Sikhs could not comprehend why we were moving from a well-developed operation with fertile land and abundantly rich water source to a barren piece of land without any assured irrigation system.

I moved to Bidadi in the spring of 1982. No doubt it was a huge change for me culturally and geographically. It also brought entirely different challenges in agriculture. In contrast to Gola, the land was barren with scarce natural water supply. Apart from these, there was a huge language barrier, although some of the Sikhs who had moved there earlier had picked up the language to some extent. Another immediate challenge was that of manpower, as most of the Namdharis were not ready to stay there due to these challenges and lack of facilities. Shortage of rations in the community kitchen was also common. In general the atmosphere was discouraging. By the time I moved to Bidadi, my father Maharaj Bir Singh Ji, had already decided and brokered a sale of the farm, which he was managing before I moved there. He was concerned about my safety and asked the buyer to complete the sale at the earliest. At the same time, Satguru Ji had sent me with clear instructions not to sell the farm. Finally, as Satguru Ji had destined, the deal faltered when the buyer was unable to get the necessary permissions he sought along with the purchase.

As we began our new life in Bidadi, we confronted a series of difficulties and struggles. However, Satguru Ji was the single most important reason through whose blessings we drew determination and inspiration. During those difficult times, He graced the farm at least a couple of times every year. His presence brought a bountiful sense of joy creating an unforgettable atmosphere.

Satguru Ji would take a keen interest in farming and dedicated His precious time so that we were encouraged to go beyond our comfort zone. He motivated us to diversify into fruit plantations and within a few years we had a significant acreage of mangoes, coconut as well as seedless grapes. All these fruit crops were not huge revenue generators for the farm but their successful planting earned us the priceless wealth of Satguru Ji's happiness. He had various ways to encourage us and constantly enjoyed bringing Sikhs from across India and abroad to show them His collection of mango and grape cultivars. He was a connoisseur of good fruits

and He had us collect numerous mango varieties from around the world. Such was His love for good fruits that He once called me from Thailand asking me to find out about a certain grape (described as red, round and crisp) that was imported there from California. As I traced the cultivar commonly known as “Flame Seedless” and gave this information to Satguru Ji, He instructed me to import its plants and grow them in the farm at Bidadi. This cultivar eventually spread into other parts of India and became a popular and major variety.

This is just one of many such instances where he constantly encouraged us to innovate and go beyond our bounds. Looking at the success of seedless grapes in Bidadi, Satguru Ji wanted us to try the same varieties in Sri Jiwan Nagar, Haryana. We procured the planting materials from Nashik and planted a couple of acres near Amritsar at Avtar Singh’s farm near Sri Jiwan Nagar. However, challenges arose due to the delay in fruition of the grapes and the crop was affected by the arrival of the rainy season. Satguru Ji noticed this and asked us to prune the plants early in June and follow the system of the tropics where two prunings take place in a year. The result of this action allowed us to get a successful crop in the month of November at a time when there are no grapes in the entire country! This ingenuity and its success amazed scientists from Punjab and Haryana Agriculture institutions who had not even thought that such a crop would be possible.

During the earlier days in Bidadi when mobile phones were not common and phone connectivity was very limited, Satguru ji was always concerned about the welfare of His Sikhs as well as the progress on the farm. He would send instructions beforehand with a set date and time when we were to call him. We would then eagerly go to Bangalore to speak with Satguruji at the predetermined time and seek His blessings. Patsha ji wanted to know all minute details about the farm and enquired about everyone’s welfare.

Once Namdhari seeds flourished, Satguru ji was very happy and showered us with His blessings. Somehow I had developed a habit of asking Him and seeking His permission before starting any new initiative as this gave us confidence to succeed. Satguru ji always practised humility; one day in front of everyone, He said, “Kaka seeks my permission for everything while I possess no knowledge.” He would guide us and bless us onto the path of success and then very humbly give us the

credit. Similarly, when things did not go well, Satguru ji always stood by us and encouraged us to persevere through those phases.

When Satguru ji left for His heavenly abode, I had never imagined or wanted to walk in His footsteps. This was the most difficult time of my life as whenever I looked and remembered Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, I felt myself to be very small. Although over time a realization took place that Satguru ji knew and shaped this destiny from the very beginning, especially when I remember that special affection he showered upon me addressing me as ‘my beta’ without me having any deserving qualities and how he showered His blessings through Mata Ji who helped me in this transformation of life. Today, assuming this responsibility, I draw a satisfaction that destiny has taken me on a path where I become a source for others to meditate on the name of the Almighty and live their life according to the *Gurbani*, which guides and shapes the life of every Sikh.

Each day for me starts and ends in their love with a prayer to give me strength such that I can tread on the path of our beloved Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.

Satguru Uday Singh Ji

Sri Bhaini Sahib

25/11/2016

FOREWORD

A visionary, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji blessed both human as well as the animal kind alike. Satguru ji was incarnated almost a century ago in 1920, like His father Satguru Partap Singh ji, in the confines of a prison at Sri Bhaini Sahib in the midst of the Kooka Movement against the British colonial rule. The British soon removed the police outpost outside the gates of Sri Bhaini Sahib by the time Satguru ji grew up to be two-and-a-half years old, prompting the Namdharis to look upon Him as their liberator.

Satguru ji's formative years were spent studying various subjects as well as life skills at the Namdhari Vidyalya, Sri Bhaini Sahib, established by Satguru Pratap Singh ji, in the company of His younger brother (Maharaj Bir Singh ji) and other children of His age. In 1939 when Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru visited Sri Bhaini Sahib along with several other leaders, Beant ji (Satguru ji's teenage name) along with His younger brother Balabh ji (Maharaj ji's teenage name) and a few of their classmates enchanted them with a devotional Indian classical music performance. Satguru ji spent the first two decades of His life under the tutelage of His father Satguru Pratap Singh ji who strictly disciplined and moulded Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's life attuned to His future as the head of the Namdharis.

In 1947, as the country witnessed the horror of partition, Satguru ji following the edict of His father Satguru Pratap Singh ji, traveled to West Punjab (now Pakistan), braving bullets and riots, prompting and helping people to leave for East Punjab across the river Ravi to safer grounds. Post-partition, He spent several months resettling the refugees at both Sri Bhaini Sahib as well as Cha-chal Kothi (later Jiwan Nagar, Sirsa), providing food, clothes, cattle, seeds as well as houses as required. In fact His large heartedness in distributing the available resources became a contention to a few and once led to a complaint to Satguru Partap Singh ji. However to everyone's surprise, Satguru Partap Singh ji lauded Satguru ji's generosity and remarked that *'if left to Him, Satguru ji would even donate the clothes that He wore'*. These prophetic words proved true and Satguru ji's magnanimity would soon be legendary.

In 1959, after Satguru Pratap Singh ji merged with the light, when Satguru ji ascended the spiritual seat of the Namdharis as His Holiness Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, Giani Zail Singh ji, remarked that the seat of Satguru Ram Singh ji that Satguru ji was ascending upon was not a seat of roses but a seat of thorns.

The situation at that point of time was actually as grim as mentioned by Giani ji. It was however through His spiritual aura, high standard of moral living and prowess that Satguru ji turned the seat of thorns into a seat of roses. In fact with His magnanimity and tenacious persuasion, Satguru ji sorted out several issues that had nagged the Namdhari community within a couple years of His leadership. He could turn even the biggest adversary into a faithful follower. His belief was that dialogue could bring communities closer and lead to peaceful life and social emancipation. Satguru ji would work across several decades with several political as well as spiritual personalities across the world, propagating peace, harmony and universal goodwill. Keeping in the forefront Satguru Ram Singh ji's teaching that 'It is a sin even to harm an ant' Satguru ji participated and propagated vegetarianism through several Vegetarian Conferences.

During His imprisonment at Rangoon, Satguru Ram Singh ji would often remark to the Namdharis who visited Him that He regretted the fact that He couldn't serve the visitors with food. He would also remark that had He been free, He would serve the best of the food and offer the best of the facilities to all Namdharis. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji soon fulfilled these prophetic wishes of the great Satguru. Namdharis would soon become successful - farmers, cattle breeders, fruit and vegetable seeds breeders, entrepreneur, service providers, writers, musicians and sportsmen. There was a time when Sansarpur was known as the nursery of hockey in India, today the Namdhari town of Sant Nagar (Sirsa) is spoken about in the same vein.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji spent His entire life, His every breath meditating on the name of the Lord, propagating and practising Gurbani, Gurmat Sangeet, living a simple and humble life, serving humanity. He was a perfect example of Satguru Pratap Singh ji's Sikh and which is why perhaps He was able to fulfill the responsibility bestowed upon Him by His father - Satguru Pratap Singh ji. An incident from His early years goes thus: When Satguru Pratap Singh ji was

distributing land to the landless in Jiwan Nagar, He sent an envoy to Satguru ji asking Him to state how much land He desired? Satguru ji pointed towards His garments and said - 'This is enough for me' - indicating the moral - "Bestow Sikhi on me and not land".

Never one to compromise on the Namdhari code of conduct and living, Satguru ji was known to have answered that He would carry His own pitcher of water if required but not compromise on the prescribed code, when a follower suggested that the code of conduct be relaxed a bit.

At the time of ascending the Spiritual seat of the Namdharis when the present Satguru ji - Satguru Uday Singh ji was asked by the press to enumerate what He envisioned - Satguru ji replied that the path to follow had already been envisioned by Satguru Jagjit Singh ji and that He would humbly follow the path set by Him. It is Satguru ji's wish that the life and times of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji be propagated amongst the non-Punjabi speaking audiences at a universal level. Hence a translation of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's sermons in English has also been published for the benefit of the readers. The responsibility of writing the English biography of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji has been bestowed upon Prof. Sharada Jayagovind from Bangalore. Prof. Sharada has translated and compiled the spiritual discourses of Srimadjagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Ragahaveshwara Bharathi Swamiji and is working on a pictorial biography of Sri Shankaracharya.

I have had the opportunity to read through this biography 'A Saga of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji'. The simple and soulful style of Prof. Sharada along with the description of various events, draws the reader into Satguru ji's world. It is a must read for all English speaking readers to understand the life and times of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji.

Swaran Singh Virk

Kariwala (Sirsa) - Presently at Sri Bhaini Sahib

25/11/2016

Reminiscences

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਉਹਾੜੀ ਸਦ ਵਾਰ ॥

Balihari Gur apne diuhari sad vaar
A hundred times a day, I am a sacrifice to my Guru;

ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਨ ਲਾਗੀ ਵਾਰ ॥

Jin manas te devte kie karat na lagi vaar
Who transforms humans to angels, at once.

As the Gurbani says, a Guru with his blessings can transform humans into angels. The enlightened soul who spreads the light of knowledge removing the darkness of ignorance is called Guru. It was nearly five centuries ago that Guru Nanak Dev Ji showed the path to salvation through meditation and simple living. All the succeeding Sikh Gurus followed this path and spread the light of Guru Nanak Ji in the world. In this Guru tradition, in the second half of the twentieth century, Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji was a tall spiritual personality who made big strides in all the fields for the welfare and well being of the world.

Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji was not a Guru who would only give sermons and blessings. He practised what he preached and himself lived life in accordance to his teachings. He did not walk on the trodden path but carved out new paths. Satguru Ji was a living example of devotion, service and divine love. He spread the message of peace and love and everyone around him felt a close bond with him. He faced all the problems of life like an ordinary person, worked hard, adapted to new knowledge and scientific innovations and promoted brotherhood among people. He gave love to children like parents, inspired youth to follow a virtuous path and motivated them to attain new heights in the fields of education and sports. He treated the poor and the aged with such compassion that they never felt neglected. His heart was filled with love for all mankind irrespective of their caste, colour or creed and this extended to birds, animals, plants and trees.

At Sri Bhaini Sahib, Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji used to spare some time from his busy schedule to play with the peacocks and feed them with his own hands. He used to

visit the Goshala to feed jaggery to the cows. For his outstanding service for the betterment of cows, Gopal Ratan award was bestowed upon him by the Government in the year 1965.

Satguru Ji had immense love for children, youth and the aged. He used to say about children:

“Children are like raw milk, you can make anything out of that. But if you fail to take care of them, they will go astray.”

With the patronage and support of Satguru Ji, many Namdhari and non-Namdhari youth were able to become successful artistes, writers, sportspersons, scientists and entrepreneurs.

He used to spend hours together with the aged, talking to them and listening from them about Satguru Partap Singh Ji. Once at Raian Farm in Ludhiana, while he was cutting and serving muskmelon to the aged, Satguru Ji said:

“I have a busy schedule, it is difficult to spare some free time but I want to serve you with my own hands”.

Satguru Ji said about seva:

“Actually, true *seva* is the one in which there is no expectation of any return.”

The credit for preserving Sikh tradition and culture as per the tenets of Sikhism and providing due respect to them in fields such as sports and classical music also goes to Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.

Satguru Ji patronised and took care of Gurmat Sangeet in its pristine, original form and promoted it greatly. He was a bridge between the lovers of Gurmat Sangeet and classical music and was a trusted channel of communication between them. He sent students to renowned music maestros to learn various musical instruments and included them in Gurmat Kirtan. Satguru Ji composed beautiful bandishes of

the Gurbani in classical music. Classical music maestros feel honoured while singing these compositions.

Taking bath early in the morning, naam simran, recitation of the Gurbani and kirtan were an indispensable part of his daily routine. Satguru Ji was very particular about the correct pronunciation of the Gurbani and the use of only tanti saaj (stringed musical instruments) for kirtan. He ensured that love, devotion and renunciation (bairaag) are visible during kirtan. Satguru Ji's presentation of the Gurbani music was so effective that it seemed as if the Gurbani was explaining itself.

In Sikh society, to earn with the sweat of one's brow is highly respected. As is mentioned in the Gurbani:

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ॥

Ghaal khae kichh hathahu dae

**One who earns and eats by his hard work
and gives some portion of this in charity**

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ॥

Nanak raah pachhaneh sae

O Nanak, he knows the true Path

Satguru Ji guided all according to this message of the Gurbani and he himself lived the principle.

Satguru Ji not only had passion for agriculture and farming but also had in- depth knowledge in this field. He inspired people to take up organic farming without using chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Satguru Ji successfully raised a variety of grapes during winters, which was a matter of astonishment even for the scientists working in the agriculture departments of universities. Satguru Ji urged and motivated Namdharis to become entrepreneurs. The success of Namdhari Seeds and Namdhari Fresh under the guidance of Satguru Uday Singh Ji, the present Satguru, is a living example of the farsightedness and vision of Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji.

According to the teachings of the Gurbani, the relation between Guru and the Sikh is supreme and is above all other worldly relationships. A Sikh should be completely devoted towards his Satguru. The Satguru is the Sikh's father, mother,

brother and friend. In the Gurbani, the Satguru has also been compared to a childhood friend like in the Dwapar Yug, Lord Krishna helped his friend Sudhama and bestowed him with all the riches. In the same manner, Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji helped millions of people, both Namdhari and non-Namdharis in their hour of need. He paid their debts, made houses for them and helped them start livelihoods.

Satguru Ji blessed our family too in the same manner. We three brothers - Sukhdev Singh, Harpal Singh and Rachhpal Singh, got the honour of serving Satguru Ji for nearly more than two decades. Our father, S. Kashmira Singh, was Satguru Ji's friend in his youth. During that phase, he used to drive the car of Baba Ji (Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji). It was Baba Ji who trained him in the mechanics of the car.

A time came in our lives when our crops failed, we were in debt and poverty was haunting us. Satguru Ji came to our rescue. He brought us to Sri Bhaini Sahib, paid our debts, made good houses for us and above all, he blessed us three brothers with his supreme *seva*.

Satguru Ji used to say:

“I had three close disciples, Lachhman Singh (Phagwara), Amar Singh (Numberdar) and Kashmira Singh. I had to take care of the children of all the three”.

Among us brothers, Rachhpal was the favourite of Satguru Ji. Satguru Ji used to say:

“All these three brothers are my sewaks, but Rachhpal Singh is more dear to me. He is the youngest of them and still these two have no grudge about it.”

For a Sikh, it is a matter of great joy and pride to be in service of his Satguru. During the Jap Paryog, Satguru Ji used to keep moun vart (vow of silence) on Thursdays. As he used to stay silent for the whole day, he communicated through gestures.

Satguru Ji was a master of all arts and a divine personality. He aptly fitted the definition of the True Guru as defined in the Gurbani.

Satguru Ji's divine face, adorable eyes, liberal thinking, charming personality, compassionate heart, charismatic smile, with graceful white attire, had the power to draw anyone towards him. He was the winner of all hearts.

Satguru Ji fulfilled all his responsibilities with complete dedication. He travelled to different continents and countries, spreading the fragrance of naam simran and the Gurbani. Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji followed and taught the teachings of Guru Nanak Ji for the welfare of humanity. The unique identity of Sikh Khalsa given by Guru Gobind Singh and the Satyugi Rahat Maryada (pious way of living) given by Satguru Ram Singh Ji were propagated by Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. His teachings will keep guiding humankind till eternity.

Satguru Ji merged with the eternal light on 13th December, 2012. Thereafter, as per Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji's wishes, Satguru Uday Singh Ji succeeded to the throne. The future of Namdhari Sikhs is bright under the leadership of Satguru Uday Singh Ji. He has organised many Sangeet Sammelans in the memory of Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. Further, he has made special efforts to make available the teachings of Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji in Punjabi, Hindi and English to people residing in India and abroad. In early 2016, Satguru Uday Singh Ji released a book titled Discourses of Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji, containing the English translation of a few discourses.

A biography of Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji in English titled "A Saga of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji" is being published. The writer of this book is Prof Sharada Jayagovind, from Bengaluru, who is a disciple of Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Raghaveshwara Bharathi Swami Ji. She has felt the blessing of Satguru Ji. The book provides a glimpse of the divine personality of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji and has been written with great devotion and dedication.

Harpal Singh Sewak
Sri Bhaini Sahib
25/11/2016

Author's Note

How does one narrate the story of someone who is infinite, someone who is without beginning or end? How does one know, understand and convey the greatness of an Avatarpurush an incarnation like Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji?

If a doll of salt steps into the fathomless ocean to measure its depth, the grandeur, majesty and the mysteries of the ocean are beyond its grasp. It would melt and become one with the waters. Similar was my experience when I set out to write the life story of His Holiness Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the Namdhari Sikh Guru. He is as tall as the Himalayas, as pure as the holy rivers and endless as the vast skies. As I launched on this spiritual journey, the truth dawned on me that the Satguru writes his own story and I am only an instrument, a tool in His hands.

I seek the blessings of all Gurus, from Guru Nanak Dev ji, Satguru Ram Singh ji, the founder of Namdhari Sant Khalsa and the lineage of Namdhari Sikh Gurus. My humble pranams to Satguru Uday Singh ji who chose me to execute His will.

One day in March 2015, my nephew Prashanta Bhat called me to ask if I could meet Satguru Uday Singh ji, the present spiritual head of the Namdhari Sikhs, to discuss a literary project. It was for writing the life story in English of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the illustrious predecessor of Satguru Uday Singh ji. At the first meeting in Bangalore, we discussed the features of the biography and I expressed my limitations as an outsider to the Namdhari religion and Punjabi culture in writing this book. During the second meeting, the preliminary outline of the book emerged. When the honour of executing this work was conferred on me, I was convinced that it was the grace of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji upon me. I was swiftly drawn into the powerful spiritual field of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji who from then on showed me the way.

My first visit to Sri Bhaini Sahib, the sacred land of Namdhari Sikhs, is memorable. Hidden amidst the lush green fields and tall trees, Sri Bhaini Sahib is the cradle and the *karmabhoomi* of Namdhari Gurus. Satguru Uday Singh ji and

Bibi Gursharan Kaur were visiting Sri Bhaini Sahib, near Ludhiana, to participate in the festival of *Baisakhi* and I had the privilege of accompanying them. I too was on a pilgrimage to understand and experience the spiritual heritage of Namdhari Sikhs.

At Sri Bhaini Sahib, I was introduced to the Sangat as the ‘Bibi from Bengaluru’ who would be writing a book on Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, their beloved Patsha ji. Hearts opened up and all wanted to share the memories of their Satguru with me. I realised that Satguru Jagjit Singh ji had not departed, he was enshrined in the hearts of all, and was truly Beant - eternal and endless.

Sri Bhaini Sahib is a pilgrimage centre of Namdhari Sikhs. This tiny town consists of the gurdwara, the residence of the Guru, the holy Ram Sarovar, Ram Mandir, the birth place of Satguru Partap Singh ji and Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. A small township has grown around the gurdwara. The framed photographs of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji adorn the halls of Sri Bhaini Sahib and the walls of all households and business establishments.

Clad in sparkling white, with flowing beard and benevolent eyes, Satguru ji beckons and blesses you. What is the secret of his charm? Here is a paripoorna Guru, a perfect Sikh, an ideal leader who is an avatar purush. I had the daunting task of presenting this magnetic personality in the pages of a book which had to be written based on the interviews given by people who knew him and lived with him. Nine decades of eventful life, from 1920 to 2012, almost a century had to be encapsulated within a few thousand words. I, as a biographer, had to perceive him through their eyes and hearts. The immensity of the work dawned on me.

On the first day of my visit to Sri Bhaini Sahib, I paid my respects to Mata Chand Kaur ji, the 85-year-old wife of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. She welcomed me with a warm smile. A steady stream of disciples waited at the Mother’s door for her darshan and blessings. I was wonderstruck to know that at such an advanced age, she kept a busy schedule starting her day with attending the morning congregational prayers at four in the morning, followed by visits to the langar, old age home, goshala and construction sites to supervise and direct the work.

Next, I met Swaran Singh Virk ji, eminent Namdhari historian, who is a treasurehouse of information. Hours of discussion with him put my work in perspective. Jai Singh ji, the grandson of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, walked me around Sri Bhaini Sahib and it was a privilege to relive Namdhari history with the scion of the noble spiritual masters. My special thanks are due to Jai Singh ji for helping us in selecting and adding titles to the photographs in the book. A string of interviews and interactions followed and I realised that they were like a million mirrors reflecting the same dazzling sun.

Taranjiet Singh ji, a talented Namdhari documentary maker, was working on a short film on Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's musical journey. The majestic Partap Singh mandir in Sri Bhaini Sahib was reverberating with melodious music. With dilruba, santoor, sarangi and sitar on their laps, Namdhari musicians, young and old, were engrossed in the web of music they were weaving. The recording for the documentary was in progress and the cameras were busy. In the midst of all this, Taranjiet Singh ji acquainted me with the rich legacy of Namdhari history and tradition.

I was absorbing in every detail, every bit, and was impressed by the invaluable contribution and sacrifice made by Namdharis to the Indian freedom struggle and cultural heritage. Yet, there was a nagging restlessness in me that the rest of India had not done justice to this leaf of Indian history.

Writing this book shook me, woke me up from my deep slumber as an Indian. It made me see the strategy of the colonisers which deliberately marginalised the movements which projected them in bad light. The massacre without trial of sixty-six Namdhari Sikhs at Malerkotla, the hangings of Namdhari patriots at Amritsar, Raikot and Ludhiana have not been given the prominence they deserved in the pages of Indian history. The brutalities which were unleashed on the Namdharis during the British Raj is in no way less than the violence inflicted on the innocent people in Jallianwala Bagh. The sacrifices made by the Namdhari freedom fighters and the Kuka Movement, which is the harbinger of Indian freedom struggle, have not been given their due in Indian history.

Writing Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's biography became an exercise in reclaiming my national heritage. It reintegrated me with the northern most part of my motherland.

My respectful pranams to Satguru Uday Singh ji for entrusting to me this noble work of penning the life story of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, spiritual master nonpareil. His Holiness' involvement in planning and executing this book has been inspiring. He has patiently read every word of the book and has offered valuable suggestions and corrections.

How can I forget the warm hospitality of Bibi Gursharan Kaur who took care of us during our visits to Sri Bhaini Sahib and Mastan Garh. Her participation in interviews and discussions enriched the book.

My thanks to Prashanta Bhat, who set me on this noble work.

Renuka Phadnis, a seasoned journalist, has been my co traveller on this literary pilgrimage. Her suggestions and editorial services have added value to the book. Gurmukh Singh, advocate, who had served Satguru Jagjit Singh ji for a number of years, is another co traveller who has made the way easy for us. He co-ordinated the numerous interviews and our visits to Sri Bhaini Sahib and was a great help in providing source material.

It is a matter of great honour that Sri Swaran Singh Virk ji, an eminent Namdhari historian, has written the Foreword to this book. My grateful thanks to Virk ji. I thank Harpal Singh Sewak for sharing his precious thoughts on Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. My sincere thanks to all members of the Namdhari sangat who accepted Renuka and me as one of them and served us parsad in the langar and shared their memories of Patsha ji. The driver who took us through the plains of Sri Jiwan Nagar, the tailor who stitched white Namdhari suits for us, the senior citizens of the old age home, the Haryana and Sahiwal cows of the goshala, all have been part of my inner landscape out of which this book has been shaped.

UT Suresh and HN Srinivas Murthy, of Flowergrafic, have made the book beautiful. My thanks to them and Ramya Reprographic Pvt Ltd, the printers. I also thank many others not named here who directly or indirectly contributed to *A Saga of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji*.

A note to the reader: in this text, 'Beant ji' refers to Satguru Jagjit Singh ji as a child. The term 'Baba ji' refers to him as a youth. The term Patsha ji, used widely

through the book, refers to Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. 'Patsha ji' means 'emperor', a term of reverence and affection.

Dr. Sharada Jayagovind
Bengaluru

A Saga of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji

Dr. Sharada Jayagovind - Author

Professor Sharada Jayagovind taught English in Gargi College, Delhi University, University of Sokoto, Nigeria, Maharani's Science College for Women and Government College, Vijayanagar, Bangalore University. Her publications include: *A Havyaka - English Dictionary (Ed. 1983)*, *English - Sanskrit Shabda Kosha (1998)*, *Dravidic Studies (Ed. 2008)*, *A Titan Among Men, Fond Memories of Noojibail Shankar Bhat (Ed. 2012)*

She has rendered in English discourses of Srimajjagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Raghaveshwara Bharathi Swamiji in three volumes: *Living With God (2009)* , *Nourishing the Soul (2013)* , *Guru, the Divine Navigator (2014)* .



Satguru Ram Singh ji
Founder of Namdhari Khalsa
(b.1816) - Exiled to Rangoon in 1872



Satguru Hari Singh ji
(Brother of Satguru Ram Singh ji)
(1819-1906)



Satguru Partap Singh ji
(Son of Satguru Hari Singh ji)
(1890-1959)



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji
(Son of Satguru Partap Singh ji)
(1920-2012)



Satguru Uday Singh ji
(Son of Maharaj Bir Singh ji)
(b.1958-)

Introduction

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji (1920-2012), the Namdhari Sikh Guru, stands tall among the spiritual masters of the twentieth century. This apostle of love, peace and non-violence is truly “Jagjit” one who has conquered the world. He won the hearts of millions through his words and deeds. His life centred on the principles of love, truth, seva, devotion to God and Satguru.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was born on 22 November, 1920, as the eldest son of Satguru Partap Singh ji and Mata Bhupinder Kaur in the village of Sri Bhaini Sahib, which is located twenty-five kilometres from Ludhiana, Punjab. When he was born, Sri Bhaini Sahib was under police surveillance in British India. The imperialists had imposed severe restrictions on the movement and activities of the Namdhari Sikhs and had curtailed their religious freedom as they had adopted the policy of non-cooperation against the British Empire. During Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's childhood and youth, the impact of colonial repression was felt on all aspects of life.

In British India, education was in the hands of the Christian missionaries who had established schools and colleges all over India. Macaulay's agenda of creating officers and clerks to run the British Raj was not acceptable to the patriotic Namdhari gurus. Satguru Partap Singh ji, the father of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, took immense pain to ensure that the Namdhari youth, received a culturally and spiritually enriched education.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji spent his childhood amidst Nature at Sri Bhaini Sahib and Ghardiwala *ashram*. He grew up in the company of saints and eminent musicians who taught him Hindustani classical music, Gurmat Sangeet and chanting of the *Gurbani*.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji received an education which transformed him in to a Sarab Kala Samrath, truly a Renaissance Man.

It was during the Partition of India that Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's skills in political affairs and human relations came to the fore. Under the guidance of his father, Satguru Partap Singh ji, he worked tirelessly in resettling the refugees from West Punjab in different parts of India, mainly in Sri Jiwan Nagar, Haryana and Mandi, Himachal Pradesh.

While Satguru Partap Singh ji played a major role in forging and holding together the Namdhari community during the turbulent years of the Indian freedom struggle, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji paved the way for the economic, cultural and spiritual progress of the community in independent India.

When Satguru Partap Singh ji merged with the light in 1959, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji took over the responsibility as the supreme spiritual head of Namdhari Sikhs.

Namdhari Sikhism is a reformist and puritanical movement founded by Satguru Ram Singh ji. It believes in the tradition of a living Guru, while mainstream Sikhism subscribes to the view that the lineage of living Sikh Gurus ends with Satguru Gobind Singh ji, the tenth Guru. Namdhari Sikhs worship both the Guru Granth Sahib and the living Guru.

Satguru Ram Singh ji, the founder of Namdhari Sikhism, was born as the eldest son of Mata Sada Kaur and Jassa Singh on 3 February, 1816. He was born into a respected carpenter family, which lived in the village of Raiyan, near Sri Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana. The child was named Ram Dhan. Miracles are associated with his birth and childhood. Even as a child he had a spiritual bent of mind.

As a young man, Satguru Ram Singh ji served in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Satguru Ram Singh ji's regiment was called the Regiment of Bhagats as he led a disciplined life and inspired the fellow soldiers to be religious. He was pained by the immoral ways of the soldiers of the Sikh army and was disillusioned with the fall in values of the society. He was also disturbed by the spread of the activities of Christian missionaries in Punjab. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the disintegration of the Sikh empire was imminent.

Satguru Ram Singh ji was a member of a unit of Prince Naunihal Singh platoon which was sent in 1841 from Lahore to Peshawar to bring the royal coffers. On its way back, the unit rested at Hazro Fort, now in Pakistan. It is said that Satguru Ram Singh ji and some soldiers of his regiment went to meet Satguru Balak Singh ji, a great saint who was living nearby. Satguru Balak Singh ji was overjoyed to see Satguru Ram Singh ji and said to him:

“I had been waiting for you.”

Satguru Balak Singh ji gave the Guru mantra to Satguru Ram Singh ji and said that he had to keep it in his heart and pass on this naam to deserving seekers. Satguru Balak Singh ji gave him sugar bubbles, a coconut, five paise and took five rounds around him in reverence and bowed before him. (*Source: Tara Singh Anjan - Satguru Ram Singh and Kuka Movement, Page 14.*)

In 1845, Satguru Ram Singh ji left the Khalsa army and returned to Sri Bhaini Sahib to live the life of a pious householder pursuing the spiritual path. The day, 12th April, 1857, was Baisakhi, an auspicious day in the history of Namdhari Sikhism. On that day, Satguru Ram Singh ji administered amrit to five of his disciples and founded the Namdhari Sant Khalsa. This spiritual movement had a sociopolitical dimension. On that day, Satguru Ram Singh ji hoisted a white triangular flag in Sri Bhaini Sahib before a small group of artisans and peasants who formed the core of his Namdhari Khalsa. It was a flag for truth, peace and freedom. The flag symbolised their intention to fight for the freedom of the motherland through non-violent means.

Satguru Ram Singh ji spelt out the policy of non-cooperation against the British rulers and declared that the Namdharis henceforth should avoid using British goods and services. This event is of great significance as it anticipated the First War of Indian Independence (1857), which shook the foundations of the British Empire. In fact, the Gandhian ideology of non violence and the use of spirituality to fight the colonial masters was first adopted by Satguru Ram Singh ji.

Satguru Ram Singh ji named his sect Namdhari as the disciples had to enshrine the Lord's name in their heart and soul. From birth to death, they would live with the *naam*.

Satguru Ram Singh ji knew that only a person of high moral values and principles could sacrifice his life for the cause of the nation and society. He set out to create this ideal Sikh who would be spiritually and morally empowered.

The code of conduct or maryada prescribed by Satguru Ram Singh ji was very demanding. It emphasised both inner and outer purity of the disciple. The Namdhari Sikh had to get up early in the morning, take a head-to-toe bath and tune his body and mind to receive the presence of Akal Purakh or God in his everyday life. His nitnem or daily schedule included long hours of naam simran, jap and chanting of the Gurbani. He could partake of only vegetarian food prepared with water from natural sources such as wells, streams, springs and rivers. He was forbidden to eat any form of meat or consume alcohol or tobacco. He had to boycott all foreign goods and institutions. Protecting the cows and motherland, feeding the hungry and the poor were his primary duties.

The early converts to Namdhari Sikhism were so intoxicated with the naam that often while chanting and singing the Gurbani they would go into a trance. Singing in groups with cymbals and dholaks, the devotees would shriek loudly in divine ecstasy and hence earned the name Kukas which meant "those who shriek".

The Kukas revered their Guru and feared none. Satguru Ram Singh ji toured the entire Punjab with his disciples, administering naam and amrit to thousands who sought his spiritual guidance. The Kuka movement spread like wildfire.

The British rulers feared Satguru Ram Singh ji's popularity and it is said that within ten years from 1857 to 1867, Satguru ji had baptised over seven lakh people. Men, women and children of all ages thronged in thousands to his dera to join the spiritual movement which gave them a unique identity and dignity. Mainly the artisans, carpenters, farmers who belonged to Jat, Ramgariah and other castes, constituted the new converts.

Both Namdhari men and women had to wear white khadi clothes and keep their heads covered with a turban or a veil. Great emphasis was laid on simple living and service above self. Religion was central to their everyday life. All Namdharis had to pray and chant the naam for at least one hour in the morning and evening.

This new form of Sikhism imposed a challenge to the activities of Christian missionaries in Punjab who had the patronage of the British government. It was also a threat to the Brahmin priests who could no longer exploit the poor peasants in the name of religion.

Satguru Ram Singh ji introduced a simple system of marriage called Anand Karaz, which dispensed with Vedic rituals and Brahmin priests. This social reform had a tremendous positive impact on the lives of ordinary people. In accordance with the instruction of the Satguru, weddings were performed in the gurdwaras in front of the Holy Granth and the Satguru. No ostentation or dowry was permitted.

After the simple wedding ceremony, all had to take food at the langar or community kitchen. The Anand Karaz system relieved poor peasants of the financial burden of getting their daughters married. In fact, if any Namdhari gave or took dowry there was severe punishment in the form of social boycott.

Satguru Ram Singh ji banned the evil practice of female foeticide and the killing of girl children, which prevailed in Punjab then. Another principle which was central to Namdhari Sikhism was the commitment to the protection of cows. In 1849, the British lifted the ban on cow slaughter. This hurt the religious sentiments of Hindus and Sikhs. The Sikhs were dismayed that a slaughterhouse had been opened at Amritsar. They were pained that beef was openly sold by the hawkers in the streets. The angered Sikhs and Hindus pleaded with the government to close the slaughterhouse. But the British Raj turned a deaf ear to their pleas.

On 14th June, 1871, a group of Namdhari Sikhs attacked the abattoir at Amritsar. They released the cows and a bitter fight followed between the butchers and the Sikhs and some butchers were killed. Those four Namdhari nationalists, who had killed the butchers, were ordered by the British authorities to be hanged from a banyan tree in public in Amritsar, on 15th September, 1871.

The last wish of the brave Namdhari martyrs was that no executioner should touch them and that they would hang themselves by tying a silken rope around their necks, instead of the leather strand. The martyrs made a mockery of death by beating drums, ringing cymbals and singing the glory of God as they marched towards the banyan tree and voluntarily embraced death. Truly, the spirit had conquered the might of the Imperial ruler.

The Amritsar episode was repeated in Raikot and precious Namdhari blood was shed again to protect the cows. These valiant protests of Namdharis against cow slaughter culminated in the Malerkotla massacre in January, 1872 where sixty-six Kuka patriots were executed by canon on the orders of James Cowan, the ruthless Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana. The Kuka martyrs were brutally executed without trial for protecting the rights of the cows to live.

The manner in which the Namdhari martyrs faced death fearlessly at Malerkotla proved beyond doubt that Satguru Ram Singh ji had created a cadre of strong men and women who could not be vanquished by the might of the British army. Naam and *jap* had given them the strength of steel.

The British exercised the only cowardly option left to them to check the spread of Satguru Ram Singh ji's influence and spiritual sway. In January 1872, they deported Satguru Ram Singh ji to Rangoon without trial and tried to crush the Kuka movement with an iron hand.

It is this heritage of physical bravery and spiritual power which Satguru Jagjit Singh ji inherited.

During the exile of Satguru Ram Singh ji, his younger brother, Satguru Hari Singh ji (1819-1906), carefully nourished and protected the spiritual fervour lit in the hearts of Namdharis.

In 1906, Satguru Hari Singh ji passed the mantle of Gurgaddi to his son, Satguru Partap Singh ji. His Holiness steered the community through the turbulent times of freedom struggle, Partition of India and the formation of a new government.

In 1959, when Satguru Partap Singh ji merged with the light, his son, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, took over as the spiritual head of the Namdharis. This biography is an attempt to distill the beauty of that pure soul who brought peace and happiness to millions.



1 CHAPTER



Birth and Childhood

ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਥੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥

Ja karta sirthi kao saje ape janai soi

The Creator who created this Universe - only He knows Himself.

ਕਿਵ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਾ ਕਿਵ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਕਿਉ ਵਰਨੀ ਕਿਵ ਜਾਣਾ ॥

Kiv kar akha kiv salahi kio varni kiv jana.

How can we speak of Him? How can we praise Him?

How can we describe Him? How can we know Him?

The peacocks of Sri Bhaini Sahib pine for Patsha ji, musicians pluck at the strings of the dilruba hoping that the Satguru, who is enshrined in their hearts, will listen to their notes. Today, Sri Bhaini Sahib is the Brindavan bereft of its charming Gopala, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, who touched and transformed the lives of millions.

An ocean of love, compassion and peace, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was a true conqueror in more than one sense. He was a spiritual Master, who conquered the limitations of the body and mind to commune with the Omnipotent; a Master whose heart responded to the call of a tiny bird and the voice of a mighty ruler; a

Master who walked the way He showed; a Master who could bring rain to parched land; one who could bring solace to the sick and dying with his healing touch and soothing words. Where can we find another Master like Him?

On 8 Maghar 1977 Bikrmi Kattak Sudi Ikadshi, Monday, 22 November, 1920, in the early hours of the dawn, at four o'clock, Mata Bhupinder Kaur, wife of Satguru Partap Singh ji, gave birth to a baby boy at Sri Bhaini Sahib, near Ludhiana in Punjab. The child was the first-born of Satguru Partap Singh ji, the



Mata Bhupinder Kaur ji

illustrious Namdhari Sikh Guru, who was the architect of the Namdhari Renaissance. The infant was born in a small room within the red-bricked walls of Sri Bhaini Sahib, which then was under the tyrannical surveillance of the British.

There was great celebration at this happy event. Mata Ram Kaur ji, known as Amboji, the maternal grandmother of the child first uttered the holy naam in the ears of the grandson and named him Jagjit Singh, which means conqueror of the world. One hundred maunds of jaggery was distributed to mark the joyous occasion. Mata Jivan Kaur ji, the paternal grandmother, started a day and night langar and fed thousands of people to celebrate the birth of the precious one. The child was fondly called Beant ji by the near and dear ones.

Beantji was very fair complexioned and the large, dreamy eyes of the child enchanted the beholder. The infant was so beautiful that the disciples who came to

see the new born baby were moved by the streak of divinity in him. In fact, Sardarni Leelawanti ji, a devotee, said that she had seen a picture of Infant Jesus and Mother Mary and thought that it was unbelievable that someone could be so beautiful. But when she beheld Beant ji and Mata Bhupinder Kaur ji, she was amazed.

She exclaimed:

“I have never seen such an attractive and beautiful mother and son ever.”

Beant ji's mother, Mata Bhupinder Kaur, hailed from a prosperous and illustrious family, which had migrated during her Grandfather Sardar Hameer Singh's time, from Karanpura near Nohar Hanumangarh in



Beant ji and Ballo ji

Bikaner state to Punjab. Mata Bhupinder Kaur, who was called Veero ji, was the youngest daughter of Sardar Sunder Singh ji, son of Sardar Hameer Singh ji. Veero ji was a blessed soul, who was to bring to the world a jewel-like Beant ji, the future Namdhari Satguru.

When Veero ji was born, a saint visited her home. He asked the parents to treat the child with love and respect and predicted that she would marry into a royal family. The prediction came true when Veero ji married Satguru Partap Singh ji in 1914 and was given the new name Bhupinder Kaur.

Beant ji's mother was well-versed in the Gurbani and discharged her duties as wife and mother with devotion and care. It is said that one day in Dera Sirhind Canal, during the month of *jap paryog*, there was shortage of food in the *langar*, the community kitchen. Mohan Singh ji of Wadala, the person in charge of the *langar*, reported the matter to Mata Bhupinder Kaur. She readily removed the golden ring from her finger, which was the only ornament she possessed. It was very dear to

her as she had received it as a gift from her husband, Satguru Partap Singh ji. Without thinking twice, she handed over this precious ornament to Mohan Singh ji and said:

“This is the only piece of jewellery I have with me. Sell it and buy the provisions, let the *langar* continue.”

Destiny played a cruel game with this pious woman. Soon after the birth of her second son, Bir Singh ji, known as Vallabh ji, in October 1923, she was seized of an ailment, which wrecked her health. She fell victim to tuberculosis, which was a fatal disease in those days.

Mata Bhupinder Kaur could not spend much time with her children who grew up in the care of their grandmothers, Mata Jivan Kaur ji and Amboji. Noble men such as Mahant Kesar Singh Majahad and Gurmukh Singh Jhabbar ji took special care of Beant ji when he was a child.

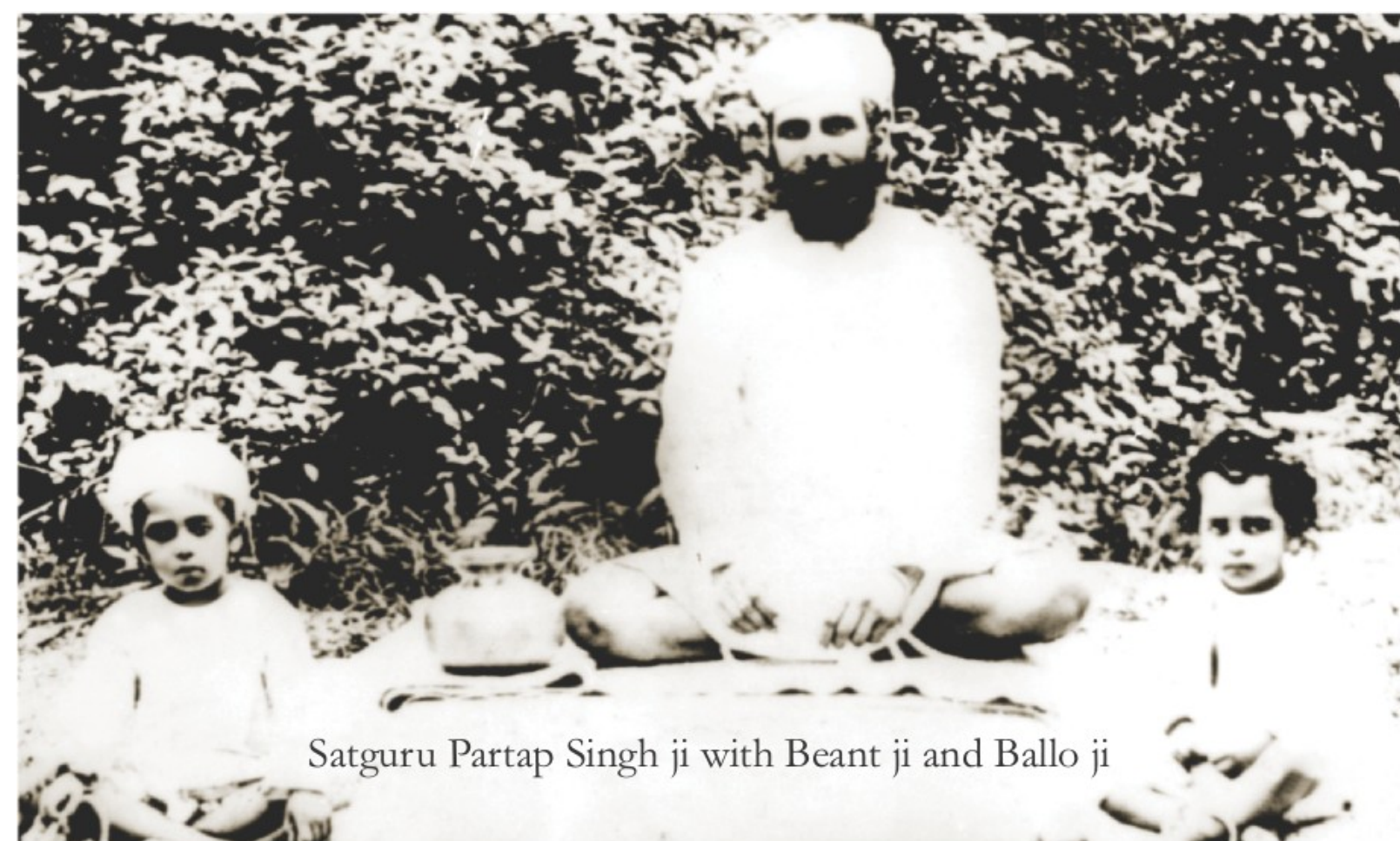
Mata Bhupinder Kaur merged with the light in September 1924 at the age of twenty-six. The tragic event left a void in the lives of Satguru Partap Singh ji and his very young sons.

Beant ji was just a child of four when he lost his loving mother. One wonders if Beant ji was destined to grow up in the care of many mothers and also to learn the lesson of detachment at such a tender age.

Satguru Partap Singh ji chose not to marry again and when his mother Mata Jivan Kaur ji pestered him to remarry, Satguru Partap Singh ji replied:

“If you can find another Bhupinder, I will marry.”

This answer reveals Satguru Partap Singh ji’s deep love and regard for his gentle wife. It was she who pleaded with him to allow women to participate in the month-long jap paryog, which was till then the privilege of men. Sant Mangal Singh ‘Arshi Farishta’, a holy man, influenced Satguru Partap Singh ji’s decision not to remarry.



Satguru Partap Singh ji with Beant ji and Ballo ji

After the untimely demise of his wife, Satguru Partap Singh ji shared the responsibility of bringing up his sons with his mother Mata Jivan Kaur ji and aides such as Gurmukh Singh Jhabbar ji and others. Amboji, the mother of Mata Bhupinder Kaur, stayed in Sri Bhaini Sahib and took care of the grandsons. She played the role of mother to Bir Singh ji (Vallabh ji / Ballo ji) who was just eleven months old when Mata Bhupinder Kaur merged with the light.

Even though Satguru Partap Singh ji adored his sons, he was concerned that they should not be spoilt by the affection showered on them by men and women of the *dera* and by doting relatives. He ensured that Beant ji and his younger brother, Ballo ji, grew up with many other children, the normal way, learning the skills needed to carry on life.

When Beant ji was just four years old, his father decided to send him from Sri Bhaini Sahib to Ghardiwala *ashram*, Hoshiarpur, at the foot of the Shivalik Hills. This *ashram* was founded by Baba Harnam Singh, a holy man.

The *ashram* was a peaceful and picturesque place blessed with the beauty and serenity of Nature. Beant ji was like a tiny bud absorbing the sweetness of the air, the openness of the skies and silently communing with Nature and God. One day this bud was to blossom full to spread its fragrance far and wide.

Gurmukh Singh Jhabbar ji, a young man of twenty-five and a trusted aide of Satguru Partap Singh ji, accompanied Beant ji to Ghardiwala *ashram*. Growing up at the *ashram* in the company of holy men and Mother Nature, Beant ji imbibed the spirit of freedom and Namdhari spiritual fervour.

Beant ji's days were filled with play, work and prayer. Yet there were days when he was restless. On one such day, when sleep eluded Beant ji, Jhabbar ji asked him:

“Beant ji, what is bothering you? Why are you not sleeping?”

Beant ji answered: “I want to see the stars.”

It was a cold winter night. Yet, Jhabbar ji took the child outside the house. Beant ji gazed at the twinkling stars for a long time. Jhabbar ji gently reminded him:

“Let us go to bed, we have to get up early in the morning.”

Beant ji insisted:

“Sant ji, bring the stars into the house. I want to see them under my roof.”

Even as a child, Beant ji was a visionary who wanted to reach out to the stars and the moons. He was a true seeker of light.

Another episode from Beant ji's childhood reveals Satguru Partap Singh ji as a very strict father, who did not spare the rod when necessary.

One day, Beant ji was playing in the garden. Just then, a bird's nest tumbled down and a few eggs broke. Satguru Partap Singh ji thought that Beant ji was

responsible for this and ordered that Beant ji be tied with a rope to a Karonda tree. When Jhabbar ji returned from work, he saw the child wilting under the hot sun and moved to untie the rope.

Bhai Vazir Singh, the personal attendant of the Satguru, warned Jhabbar ji. He said:

“Oh *Bhai*, do not untie the rope, whoever dares to do so shall face Satguru ji’s *khunda*.”

Undeterred, Jhabbar ji walked towards the tree, untied the child, bathed him and spread a soft bed on the verandah and made him sleep. Satguru Partap Singh ji came out after an hour and was surprised to see his son sleeping peacefully in the arms of Jhabbar ji. By then, his anger had melted and with a sense of relief, he said:

“Now that the *patandar* has come, I am not worried. He will take care of my son.”

While Jhabbar ji took care of Beant ji like a mother, it was Mahant Kesar Singh Majahad who taught him to recite the *Gurbani* and meditate on the *naam*. Performing *naam simran* and observing strict *maryada* became a way of life with Beant ji from childhood.

When Beant ji was four-and-a-half years old, he started his lessons in music. The child’s love for music and his sincere efforts at learning made the father and the teachers happy.

Beant ji learnt Hindustani music, Gurmat sangeet and religious literature from Ustad Harnam Singh ji of Chawinda. He also learnt to sing and play the dilruba. At an early age, he realized the truth that music was not just a fine art but a means to reach God as it seeps into the soul and connects one to Him.

Life during childhood for Beant ji was hard. Music lessons would commence as early as four in the morning. The teachers would be ready by three o’clock tuning the instruments. At such a tender age, Beant ji imbibed the values of rising early,

being punctual and being respectful towards elders. He lived by these values throughout his life.

Much later in life when someone asked Satguru Jagjit Singh ji:

“Were you not tired of sitting through such long sessions of music?”

Satguru ji replied:

“I immersed myself in music and that is what my Satguru wanted me to do; making him happy was my primary duty.”

Beant ji’s paternal grandmother, Mata Jivan Kaur ji, filled the void left by the untimely death of his mother.

She used to cook delicacies and feed the children of the *dera*. In a way she was mother to all the children who grew up in Sri Bhaini Sahib. She took great care to see that they were always clean and that they cultivated good manners and habits.

She advised the youngsters to wear simple clothes so that they could serve without fear of spoiling them. Once, she came across Beant ji washing the utensils of the *sadh sangat*. She was very happy that her grandson was willingly performing *seva*.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji recalled in one of his discourses that his grandmother did not allow children to stir sugar in milk with the twig of the Kikar tree as it has an intoxicating effect. She wanted the children to stay away from such substances.



Mata Jivan Kaur ji with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

The grandmother inspired the children with stories depicting the valour of Satguru Ram Singh ji and the Kuka movement. As a young girl of twelve, in 1872, Mata Jivan Kaur ji had witnessed the tragic scene of Satguru Ram Singh ji's banishment from Sri Bhaini Sahib and his last travel in a bullock cart to Ludhiana to be exiled to Rangoon by the British.

When Mata Jivan Kaur ji merged with the eternal light in 1943, Beant ji felt the loss acutely.

Education

Satguru Partap Singh ji founded a vidyalya on the premises of Sri Bhaini Sahib in 1928 to provide education to Namdhari children, since they were not sent to the schools run by the missionaries or the British. As per the hukamnama of Satguru Ram Singh ji, the Namdharis boycotted all British institutions and opposed the cultural imperialism of colonial education. The Namdhari Vidyalya aimed at providing a spiritually and culturally enriched education to Namdhari youth.

At the Vidyalya, along with other children, Beant ji learnt languages such as Sanskrit, Punjabi and Hindi. Pandit Mansa Singh Kaumi and Pandit Harbans Lal taught Hindi and Sanskrit respectively. Buta Singh Qila Raipurwala taught

Mathematics. Master Balwant Singh and Lachhman Singh stressed on the correct recitation of the Gurbani. Ustad Harnam Singh narrated legends to Beant ji the students.

Beant ji learnt English from Mehta Bholanath, a retired Indian Civil Service officer, who influenced Beant ji immensely. Mehta Bhola Nath ji was a multifaceted, versatile person, who could heal people with his medicine and engage in philosophical discussions with the erudite. It was from this gentleman that Beant ji learnt the art of keeping books neatly and using them regularly. Beant ji developed the habit of consulting the dictionary for the right meaning of words from this scholar. Later in life, the Mahan Kosh was a constant companion of Beant ji.

Mehta ji, the English teacher, was very fond of Beant ji. When he was on his deathbed, someone asked him his last wish and he replied:

“I want to be reborn to write the life story of Beant ji.”

At the Vidyalya, Beant ji and his friends learnt the values of hard work, sincerity and truthfulness. Love of the motherland was a virtue instilled in them at every step. Saints such as Sant Takhat Singh imparted the spirit of Namdhari culture and philosophy and inculcated in the students the pride of being a Punjabi and Indian. He was a close associate of Satguru Ram Singh ji. He was known to perform many miracles. On his way to Rangoon to meet Satguru Ram Singh ji, Sant Takhat Singh was detained in Dhaka by the British. The British officer in charge of the prison asked Takhat Singh to display his powers and free himself. The saint answered:

“If He wills, I shall escape.”

After a couple of days, Takhat Singh ji unchained himself and escaped from the prison. When Satguru Ram Singh ji came to know of it, he admonished Sant Takhat Singh and said that such divine powers are not for display. Satguru ji advised him to surrender to the British and Takhat Singh ji obeyed the orders of the Satguru and served the term in prison.

Sant Takhat Singh spent a few years in Sri Bhaini Sahib and taught Namdhari philosophy and history to Beant ji and other children at the Vidyalya.

Beant ji's father, Satguru Partap Singh ji, wished that Beant ji would spend his childhood in the company of saints and sages who would provide the moral ground necessary for him to grow into a spiritually empowered individual. He desired that his son be rooted in the native tradition and culture imbibing the values of humanity, truth and compassion.

Music was a major subject of study at this Vidyalya. Great masters taught Hindustani music. Singing the Gurbani and other devotional songs was an integral part of the students' life.

Ustad Bhai Mastan Singh ji, Ustad Bhai Udho Khan ji and Ustad Bhai Taba ji Rababi trained Beant ji and Ballo ji in Hindustani classical music and Gurmat sangeet. Beant ji studied in the academy for twelve years and blossomed into Baba ji, a disciplined and devout Gursikh.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Vidyalya in 1939 and was impressed with the system of education imparted to the children. He also appreciated the melodious and sacred music rendered by the children.

The Vidyalya also laid emphasis on building a good physique and encouraged the students to learn horse-riding, swimming, badminton, football, wrestling and other games. This love of physical fitness inculcated in childhood remained with Satguru Jagjit Singh ji throughout his life. It was a treat to watch him play badminton at the ripe age of eighty.

Pandit Rajinder Singh ji, Kundan Singh Nakai ji, Pritam Singh Kavi ji, Pritam Singh Panchi ji, Tara Singh Ragi ji, Giani Balwant Singh ji, are some of Beant ji's childhood friends with whom he shared a close relationship, which was a bonding for life.

Beant ji's school days were filled with pranks and fun. Once Beant ji told Kundan Singh Nakai, his dear friend, that they had never quarrelled even once. So Nakai ji said:

“Let us stop talking for a month.”

The two friends avoided each other's company and, for a month, the self-imposed silence continued. At the end of the month, Beant ji was tired of this game and said:

“Let us put an end to our silence.”

Such was the friendship that even if they wanted to quarrel, they could not.

Pandit Rajinder Singh ji who was Beant ji's maternal cousin was very close to him. Once while narrating how Sant Labh Singh Fattay hit one of their classmates, Beant ji demonstrated this with a powerful slap on Rajinder Singh's cheek. Before Rajinder Singh could realise what had happened, Beant ji had disappeared from the scene.

For such pranks, Beant ji was often admonished and corrected by his teachers. Beant ji was very tolerant and accepted whatever punishment was given, without a murmur. He was never conscious of his status as the son of the Satguru. Humility was a natural trait in him.

Like the children of the villagers, Beant ji and Ballo ji had to wash their own clothes, make rotis, stitch clothes, sweep and clean the floor, take care of cows, buffaloes and horses.

Beant ji and friends used to often visit Sirhind Canal near Sri Bhaini Sahib for a swim. When hungry, they would come out of the waters and prepare large quantities of rotis and relish them.

Beant ji was very fond of cooking and feeding others. In the Vidyalya, the boys had to take turns to prepare food in the langar and when Beant ji's turn came he enjoyed this work of providing food to others.

Kundan Singh Nakai ji recollects that during those days, they used to cook food under a tamarind tree. Beant ji used to prepare langar neatly and swiftly. The day Beant ji was to prepare the langar he himself would clean the utensils, knead the flour, cook vegetables and bake rotis. He would serve the friends with great affection and warmth.

Once while Beant ji was preparing the langar, his friend, Nakai ji, was deputed to scare away the crows. After a while, a crow flew to perch on the tree and began cawing. Nakai ji threw a stone at the crow and the bird fell on the ground. Beant ji was pained at this and said:

“If the crow dies, it will be a great sin.”

Just as he said that, the crow slowly rose to its feet, spread its wings and flew away.

With a great sense of relief, Nakai ji said:

“Look, the crow has flown away. It's not a sin anymore.”

Beant ji was happy that the crow was unharmed.



Namdhari children at Sri Bhaini Sahib



As a young man, Beant ji was very energetic and fond of athletics and games. He was a swift runner and none of his friends could match his speed. He could ride a bicycle and a horse with equal skill and ease. Satguru Partap Singh ji, a skilled rider himself, admired and complimented Beant ji's skill in riding and controlling horses.

Beant ji had a playful side to his personality. Baba Lachman Singh Jati, one of the teachers at the Vidyalya, was visually impaired in one eye. One day he got very angry with the children and admonished them for some mischief they had committed in his class. As punishment, Beant ji and his friends had to sit like murgas for one period.

Squatting like a murga refers to the traditional way of punishment in a classroom where the student is made to bend forward and hold his ears and sit like a hen. When the entire class had turned into human "hens", Beant ji goaded a friend of his to slip out of the classroom. He thought that the teacher would not notice the boy go out because the teacher was blind in one eye. The friend who followed Beant ji's advice was caught by the teacher and received a good thrashing.

Beant ji enjoyed playing the game of hide-and-seek. He was very good at hiding and could not be found easily. But one day his friend Kundan Singh Nakai caught him. The room was dark. Beant ji pushed the friend down on the ground, beat him up and ran out of the room. He came out and sat on the platform of the well, pretending nothing had happened. After a couple of minutes, Kundan Singh Nakai came out of the kothi. He complained to Beant ji:

"I am quitting the game. I am not going to play any longer."

Very innocently, Beant ji asked him: "Why, what happened?"

Nakai said:

"There is a fellow with big biceps inside the room. When I caught him, he beat me up."

Beant ji consoled his friend that this would not happen again and that he would thrash that fellow if he troubled him again.

Later in life, when Beant ji became the Satguru, he would invite his childhood friends to Sri Bhaini Sahib and relive the happy memories. They used to

accompany him during his travels and all of them have written memoirs sharing the precious time they spent with Beant ji.

When people beheld Beant ji as a child, they intuitively felt that he was cut out for a great destiny. Even though he grew up amidst the children of the kothi as one among them - eating the same food, sleeping on the reed mat, wearing white khadi clothes, many a time, the spark of divinity shone through him.

When Beant ji was a child, a Sikh asked him his name and he replied with the following verse indicating his divinity.

ਅਗਸਤ ਆਦਿ ਜੇ ਬਡੇ ਤਪਸਪਤੀ ਬਿਸੇਖੀਐ ॥

Agast adi je bade tapaspti bisekhiyay

Behold! All the distinguished and great ascetics including Agastya

ਬਿਅੰਤ ਬਿਅੰਤ ਬਿਅੰਤ ਕੋ ਕਰੰਤ ਪਾਠ ਪੇਖੀਐ ॥

Beant Beant Beant ko karant path pekhiyay

Are reciting the praises of the infinite, limitless Lord

Source: “Akaal Ustat”, a Bani of 10 th Master Guru Gobind Singh ji



2 CHAPTER



Father and Son

ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਇੱਕੋ ਹੋਇ ਜੋ ਗੁਰ ਭਾਇਆ ॥

Gur Sikh Iko Hoi Jo Gur Bhaaiaa.

It was the Lord's desire that the Guru and the disciple would become one.

The life story of Namdhari Sikh Gurus is like the birth and flow of holy rivers - divine and perennial. It is like the story of river Ganga who descends from the heavens. She is called Gangotri at the snow-peaked Gomukh; she is Bhagirathi in the Himalayan ranges and Ganga in the plains before she finally merges with the mighty ocean at Ganga Sagar. By whatever name you call her she is the same life force. Similarly, the divinity and continuity of the guruparampara can be seen in Namdhari Sikh tradition. This tradition starts with Guru Nanak, and that divine light manifested itself in Satguru Ram Singh ji, the founder of Namdhari Sant Khalsa, and continued to live in Satguru Hari Singh ji, Satguru Partap Singh ji, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji and now in Satguru Uday Singh ji.



Satguru Partap Singh ji
with his son, Baba ji

Like Prince Bharata who took care of Ayodhya during the exile of his brother Sri Rama, Satguru Hari Singh ji reigned over the Namdhari Sangat when his elder brother Satguru Ram Singh ji was banished to Rangoon.

During Satguru Hari Singh ji's reign (1872-1906) the British rulers were so repressive that the Satguru had to seek their permission before he travelled out of Sri Bhaini Sahib. He was confined to this gurdwara for thirty-four long years. His greatest contribution was keeping the Namdhari sangat together to preserve the spiritual and patriotic fervour of Namdharis at the most critical time when the British were trying to wipe away the Kuka movement.

In 1899, when famine stalked across the states of Punjab and Bikaner, the langar of Sri Bhaini Sahib fed thousands of people each day, regardless of caste and creed. Impressed by this selfless service, the British Commissioner of Ambala offered to donate two thousand five hundred acres of land to Sri Bhaini Sahib for the common kitchen. Satguru Hari Singh ji declined the offer with these words:

“By taking two thousand five hundred acres of land from you, should we accept that our motherland belongs to you? No, we shall not do that. The land and the country is ours. We will take it back from you and you will have to leave our land.”

When Satguru Hari Singh ji merged with the eternal light in 1906, the responsibility of leading the Namdhari sangat fell on his son Satguru Partap Singh ji, who ascended the throne at the age of sixteen. By then, the ugliest face of imperialism had manifested itself in the massacres of Namdharis at Amritsar, Raikot and Malerkotla. The Namdharis were still reeling under the oppressive rule of the British. Sri Bhaini Sahib was under the strict surveillance of the police. Namdharis were persecuted for holding religious congregations which was considered an unlawful activity.

Satguru Partap Singh ji had a big challenge before him. He had to first inspire and retain the flock of faithful Namdharis and join hands with the rest of the patriots to fight the alien rule. He had understood that the only answer to the divide-and-rule policy of the British was to unite and fight. But how was he to achieve this when the British rulers prevented even the assembly of more than five Namdharis at one

place? The laws were very harsh and even reading the Gurbani attracted imprisonment. Under these circumstances, how could he hold discourses or gatherings of his disciples? But a Satguru always knows the way. He continued to tread the path shown by Satguru Ram Singh ji, the path of spiritual empowerment through naam simran, nonviolence and non-cooperation against the British.

During the First World War in 1914 when the British rulers gave a call to Indians to join the army and fight along with the Allies, Satguru Partap Singh ji issued an order to Namdharis not to heed the call. He said that Namdharis would shed blood for their motherland and not for the white tyrants. Satguru Partap Singh ji's political wisdom saved the precious lives of Namdharis. Gandhi ji and Congress hoped that cooperating with the British would hasten the freedom of India and encouraged recruitment of thousands of Indians into the British army. But in 1919, soon after the First World War, British rulers paid back this service with the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

Fortunately, after the First World War, the British rulers relaxed their hold on India. In 1923, the vigil on Sri Bhaini Sahib was lifted and the Namdharis were relatively free to worship and live without fear.

The year 1920 was very significant in the life of Satguru Partap Singh ji and the Namdharis. It marked the birth of his son Beant ji, the future Satguru.

It was also the year of publication of the first issue of Satjug, the Punjabi weekly magazine, which played a key role in creating spiritual, political and social awareness among Namdharis. It became a powerful voice of freedom and the aspirations of Namdharis.

When Beant ji was born, the happy news reached Satguru Partap Singh ji, the father, who was at Nankana Sahib. He had gone there to attend the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday. His Holiness considered it a good omen and intuitively felt that his son was marked for a great destiny.



Satguru Partap Singh ji with prominent Sikh leaders



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Vinoba Bhave



Satguru Partap Singh ji and Baba ji with leaders of Azad Hind Fauj



Satguru Partap Singh ji, Baba ji, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Smt. Indira Gandhi



Satguru Partap Singh ji with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Sri C. Rajagopalachari

The 1930s were an important period in the life of Satguru Partap Singh ji. The freedom of the motherland was the main objective of his work during this period. Satguru ji had formed a close rapport with the Congress leaders. He played a major role in the success of the Annual Session of the Congress held in 1929 at Lahore. Thousands of Namdharis participated in the procession with a hundred Namdhari horsemen leading. Mata Jivan Kaur ji, the mother of Satguru Partap Singh ji, ran the langar, feeding thousands of delegates who attended the session.

By the 1940s, Satguru Partap Singh ji was a force to reckon with in the political arena of Punjab and India. He was a powerful spiritual and political leader to whom even the Indian National Congress leadership looked up for guidance and support. During 1940s and 50s, he stood at the helm of the political affairs of Punjab. Beant ji, who was called Baba ji during his teens, was very proud of his father's role in the freedom struggle. His father's political strategies and sacrifices inspired Baba ji.

Baba ji carried out every command of Satguru Partap Singh ji. There is an interesting episode with regard to the visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the birthplace of Guru Nanak. When Pandit ji visited Punjab on an election campaign, the Akalis were against the Congress. Satguru Partap Singh ji had extended support to the Congress and Pandit ji was close to the Satguru.

Pandit ji expressed a desire to visit Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of Guru Nanak and pay his respects. Satguru Partap Singh ji told him that it was a risky and difficult proposition as the place was under the control of the Akalis. Yet, Satguru Partap Singh ji entrusted this task to his son Baba ji. Like Hanuman who executes the order of Sri Rama, Baba ji undertook this challenging task.

Baba ji and his youth wing formed a ring around Pandit ji who was dressed in white. They swiftly walked with him inside the gurdwara and before the priest could realise who the visitor was, the darshan was over.

In October 1934, Satguru Partap Singh ji organized the Guru Nanak Naam Leva Conference at Sri Bhaini Sahib to bring together all followers of Guru Nanak, irrespective of the sect to which they belonged. The conference was a big success as all Sikh leaders agreed to work together for the freedom of the motherland. The Sarav Sampardai Conference, Hindu Sikh Milaap Conference, and the 1939 State People's Conference at Ludhiana were all part of this vision to unite Sikhs and Hindus together and put an end to the foreign rule.

Satguru Partap Singh ji worked with leaders such as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Master Tara Singh, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Pattabhi Sitaramayya for Indian Independence. Satguru ji organized Gurmat Sangeet Sammelan in 1933 to promote Gurmat Sangeet and the use of stringed instruments like dilruba, santoor, sarod and sitar during the kirtans and singing of the Gurbani.

The State People's Conference, held in February 1939, in Ludhiana marked the emergence of Satguru Partap Singh ji as a national leader. The conference on Punjabi language was held in 1942 at Sri Bhaini Sahib. In March 1943, at the Hola festival, Satguru Partap Singh ji organized a Hindu-Sikh Reconciliation Conference. Harmony among different communities and the cause of protecting

cows from slaughter houses were the main themes. Baba ji and his team of young men assumed the responsibility of making arrangements for the delegates and conducting the sessions. Baba ji actively participated in these conferences as an organizer implementing the orders of his father, Satguru Partap Singh ji.

Partition of India - Creation of Sri Jiwan Nagar

After the Second World War, there were indications that the British would give freedom to the Indian subcontinent. The freedom of the motherland was uppermost in Satguru Partap Singh ji's mind. When Pandit Nehru and Moulana Azad asked the Satguru at Wavell Conference in 1945 in Shimla about the demands of the Namdharis, the Satguru replied:

“Our only objective is to get freedom for the country, protection for the cows, uplift of the poor and the downtrodden; I do not want anything else...; I can sign on a blank paper...(Source: Discourses of Satguru Partap Singh ji, Vol 2, p xix).”

Satguru Partap Singh ji was a visionary who intuitively felt that the British would divide India into two and a bloodbath would ensue. Hoping to prevent a holocaust, he met Gandhi ji and pleaded with him to use his political stature to prevent the Partition of India. Due to various reasons, Gandhi ji and other Congress leaders could not heed this plea and in August 1947 India was cut into two bleeding parts.



The India-Pakistan Partition was one of the most painful human tragedies in world history. Millions of people were uprooted from their ancestral homes and fled across the borders to the newly-created nations depending upon their faiths. Hindus and Sikhs left lands demarcated as Pakistan and Muslims living in India left for Pakistan. There was panic, confusion and untold misery. Women and children were tortured, raped and murdered. Trainloads of people were butchered. Punjab and Bengal provinces bore the brunt of Partition. There was widespread violence and arson. Entire villages were set ablaze.

At this juncture, Satguru Partap Singh ji took upon himself the responsibility of saving the lives of innocent people. Earlier, in the Hola Mela of Sheikhpura Bedad in March 1947, His Holiness had asked all the Hindus, Sikhs and Namdharis to cross river Ravi and come over to East Punjab in India. He had warned them of the possibility of violent communal riots and told them that if, by God's grace, nothing happened, they could always return home.

Satguru ji knew that uprooting oneself from one's home and land is extremely difficult and painful. Yet, it was inevitable. Hence, he personally went to every village and pleaded with the people to come to the Indian side of Punjab. He deputed his son, Baba ji and a group of young men to persuade the Namdharis to send at least their women and children to India. Those who heeded the call of the Guru escaped the holocaust without even a scratch. The rest had to face the fury and agony of Partition.

Satguru Partap Singh ji had ordered Namdhari Sikhs not to harm Muslims. If any Muslim women were left behind in India, they were to escort them to their families with due respect.

The greatest contribution made by Satguru Partap Singh ji which needs to be embellished in letters of gold in the annals of history is the manner in which His Holiness resettled the refugees of the Partition. The creation of Sri Jiwan Nagar in Sirsa District, Haryana, the largest Namdhari settlement in India, speaks volumes about the vision and compassion of the spiritual Master.



Baba ji and Ballo ji performing seva

As an instance of farsightedness, in January 1947, Satguru Partap Singh ji bought 12,430 acres of land in Hisar district of Haryana consisting of three and a half villages namely Chuchal Kothi, Jag Malera, Kanjarwala and Alipur, with the intention of forming Namdhari settlements. These villages were renamed as Sri Jiwan Nagar, Sant Nagar, Damdama and Haripura, respectively and formed the new Namdhari settlements.

The total cost of the land transaction was Rs. 30,90,000. As the Namdharis started shifting from West Punjab (Pakistan), to India they were accommodated in the area. Along with Baba ji, Maharaj Bir Singh ji, Karam Singh Patwari, Sardar Avtar

Singh, Sardar Channan Singh Tharaj, Kashi Ram and others, took the responsibility of getting the land registered.

Satguru Partap Singh ji communicated to people that those who were interested in buying land in these villages could procure it at the rate of Rs. 5,500 per murabba. Wealthy buyers were allotted land of which three-fourths was cultivable and one-fourth was barren.

A number of poor Sikhs who worked as labourers in West Punjab were allotted four to five acres of land free of cost. Some land was earmarked for a school and a langar. Satguru ji used his good offices with the Government of India and ensured that the Namdhari refugees who possessed land in Pakistan were allotted land in this area, so that a large community of Namdharis could be formed in Sri Jiwan Nagar.

Satguru Partap Singh ji assigned the responsibility of maintaining the accounts of this transaction to Baba ji and Master Balwant Singh ji. This was a community enterprise and is said to be one of the largest land transactions in pre-Independent India. 'Member' Harbans Singh, the surviving grand old man of 105 years, has an interesting story to narrate on this. He told us that the stamp papers available in Hisar was inadequate for registering the land and papers worth Rs. 45,000 had to be bought from Lahore.

Harbans Singh, (known as 'Member' as he was a Panchayat member) bought his share of the land in Hisar district. Then, as per the advice of the Satguru, he sent his family from West Punjab to his hometown in India. Harbans Singh stayed on in West Punjab hoping that Partition would not take place.

But against such hopes, India was divided into two in August 1947. When Punjab was bleeding, Satguru Partap Singh ji did not hesitate for a moment to send his son Baba ji to the newly created Pakistan to bring the Hindus and Sikhs safely to India. The father had given the instruction to Baba ji that this task should be performed with utmost care. He told the son:

"Kaka, you should see that not a single human being, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim, should be hurt or killed."

Baba ji and the young men who worked to bring the refugees to the Indian side and transport the Muslims to Pakistan carried out the command of the Satguru

with great compassion and courage. The migrating Muslims were provided protection, and the caravans travelling towards Pakistan used to stop at Sri Bhaini Sahib for food and water.

The Partition of India was a story of violence, death and pain and it brought forth the beast in Man to the forefront. This human tragedy left an indelible mark on Baba ji's mind. He had seen enough pain, he had seen enough bloodshed, he had seen enough violence during those days. This traumatic event laid the foundation of the philosophy of peace and non-violence, values on which his life stood. He would not think of hurting or killing any living being.



Satguru ji and Baba ji - the father and the son - personally took upon themselves the task of applying the balm on the wounded souls of the refugees. As they poured in at the borders, Baba ji and his volunteers guided the caravans of the

refugees to Amritsar. Once, Satguru Partap Singh ji himself crossed the border when both sides of Punjab were burning and bleeding with violence. Many a time, Satguru ji camped at Amritsar to receive the uprooted masses.

The refugees from Pakistan followed different routes to reach India. Often, it was their instinct or Guru kirpa which saved them from death. They had to either trek or travel by bullock carts or trains. Their companions were only hunger, thirst and fear.

One day, the fleeing refugees were waiting to board the train to India. Among them was a group of Hindus and Sikhs sitting with Sant Gopal Singh ji, a pious soul, at the Chooherkana railway station. They were chanting the naam. When a train arrived at the platform, the waiting refugees ran towards the train and began to scramble for space. To their horror, some Pakistani soldiers who were travelling on that train started shooting indiscriminately at the refugees. When hundreds fell prey to their bullets, only Sant Gopal Singh ji and the fifteen Sikhs sitting around him remained unhurt. This was the power of the naam.

Master Amrik Singh, the eighty-six-year-old writer and poet, stoic and sage-like, one of the refugees of the Partition holocaust, is now settled in Sri Jiwan Nagar. He is the “Guru of Gurus” as he taught at the Sri Jiwan Nagar school, where the present Namdhari spiritual head Satguru Uday Singh ji studied. Master Amrik Singh ji recalls the grace and guiding hands of Satguru Partap Singh ji and Baba ji which rescued refugees like him from death and paved the way for their rebirth. It is their effort which gave them a new lease of life in India.

When Master Amrik Singh, then a teenager, fled from Pakistan with his parents, grandparents and younger sister, little did he know that the journey would be the last for his sister. She fell prey to the bloodthirsty mobs which slaughtered over one hundred and fifty people in front of them in Lahore from where they boarded the train to Amritsar.

With the naam on their lips and the Satguru in their hearts, Amrik Singh and his grandparents reached the Amritsar railway station. They were hungry and tired, they had no strength left in them even to say Sat Sri Akaal. Namdhari volunteers at the station welcomed them, offered food and directed them to Sri Bhaini Sahib.

Satguru Partap Singh ji received the refugees at the main gate with tears in his eyes. They stayed in Sri Bhaini Sahib for two days and boarded the train to Sirsa from Ludhiana. There were thousands of refugees like them. From Sirsa to Sri Jiwan Nagar, the young men and women were asked to walk down the mud paths while the old and the infirm were sent by bullock carts to begin a new life.

The refugees were landless, homeless and penniless, yet they thanked God for being alive. Then, Sri Jiwan Nagar was an alien, arid and unfriendly land. Water was scarce, the land was covered with shrubs and thorny bushes and the weather was harsh.

The refugees had to come to terms with the painful loss of property, family and friends. But the greatest consolation was that their Satguru was with them to guide and protect. New homes had to be built, new relationships had to be forged and life had to start anew. The langar took care of their hunger and the Satguru took care of their souls.

Baba ji and the band of young men were in charge of distributing grains, medicines and clothes to the refugees. Baba ji recalled in a discourse that he himself used to transport 1,600 maunds (59,200 kg) of foodgrains on tractor to the langar at Sri Jiwan Nagar every month.

One day, Master Balwant Singh, who was assisting Baba ji in distributing clothes and blankets to the refugees, complained to Satguru Partap Singh ji that if Baba ji continued to give away so many clothes, soon there would be a shortage. Satguru ji called Baba ji for an explanation. Baba ji answered:

“Satguru ji, by your kirpa, the stores are full.”

Satguru Partap Singh ji was satisfied with this answer and told Balwant Singh:

“If Vadda Kaka has his way, he would even distribute the clothes we are wearing.”





“If Vadda Kaka has his way, he would even distribute the clothes we are wearing.”

Such was the love and generosity of Baba ji whose heart went out to the suffering refugees.

Life had to go on for the refugees and it is said that with the grace of the Guru, even a desert can be transformed into a land of milk and honey. Those days, there was an acute shortage of water in the villages around Sri Jiwan Nagar. The Agriculture Department dug a borewell in Sri Jiwan Nagar which went down to five hundred and fifty feet, yet failed to strike water. After Satguru ji showered his blessings on the land, water gushed out at sixty feet in different parts of Sri Jiwan Nagar. When Satguru ji and Baba ji started residing in the Sri Jiwan Nagar area, the region also started receiving ample rainfall. Within a few years, the desert-like landscape had turned fertile and green.

The young men among the refugees were formed into a workforce and joined hands with Satguru ji and Baba ji to build this new land of hope. Today's wealthy villages of Sri Jiwan Nagar with palatial houses and shiny long cars were founded on the sweat, strength and commitment of the Satguru and his disciples. In those days there were no proper roads. Volunteers and refugees had to use bicycles or trek down the dusty dry patches of land.

The refugees were given seeds, cattle, and equipment necessary for farming. In Sri Jiwan Nagar, the first three years, community farming was undertaken and the yield was divided among the farmers based on their landholdings and the labour put in.

Baba ji and his team, under the direction of Satguru ji, established a brick kiln so that the refugees could earn wages needed for survival. Men would cut firewood from the forests and supply to the kiln and earn a few rupees. These bricks were given free of cost or at subsidized rates to the settlers and were used for construction of homes, cowsheds, roads and wells.

Amrik Singh ji recalls that during those days, he had to run the tractor day and night. The old, rickety, tractor would make a lot of noise. One day, disturbed by

this, Baba ji came out of his room and asked him why he had not stopped the work for the day. Amrik Singh ji said that they needed a couple of hours to complete the allotted work. At this juncture, the workers stopped for a while to have a glimpse of their dear Baba ji. Amrik Singh the taskmaster goaded the workers to continue. He said:

“Chalte raho, chalte raho.” (Keep going, Keep going)

Baba ji smiled and repeated the words:

“Chalte raho, chalte raho.”

After this incident, whenever Baba ji met Amrik Singh ji, he would say:

“Chalte raho, chalte raho!”

This episode reveals the involvement of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji in the lives of the ordinary refugees, his patience, affection and sense of humour. Instead of getting irritated by the noise, or ordering to stop the work, he left the decision to Amrik Singh ji, who was leading the group of workers.

During the days when Sri Jiwan Nagar was built, Baba ji and his team of young men would work tirelessly. Baba ji would be on horseback or on a tractor supervising and guiding the work. Due to overwork and exhaustion, Baba ji started falling ill frequently and had attacks of diarrhoea. One day, a refugee at Sri Jiwan Nagar asked him:

“Baba ji, you have nutritious food and no worries like us, then why do you fall ill?”

Baba ji smiled and answered:

“It is all by your kirpa.”

By this, Baba ji meant that he was taking upon himself the worries of the refugees. His words indicate that Baba ji possessed the qualities necessary for a Satguru - a mother-like heart, a father-like concern and God-like compassion.

Sri Jiwan Nagar was not built in a day. After years of sweat and struggle, this Namdhari Sikh settlement held up its head high as a symbol of success, a testimony to selfless seva and sacrifice by the Satguru and his disciples.

In April 1959, Satguru Partap Singh ji told the Namdhari Sikh Sangat at Sri Jiwan Nagar:

“This is our last visit to Sri Jiwan Nagar. Those who want to obey Vadda Kaka can stay here. Others may leave.”

The last few months of Satguru Partap Singh ji’s life on earth were spent in Sri Bhaini Sahib and he was disturbed that some people had filed a number of false civil suits against him. He did not want to appear in court and expressed his anguish this way:

“I have built villages and purified the breed of cows. I wish I could have reformed the race of men. Our elder son, Vadda Kaka, will take care of the sangat and all work will be done by him.”

These words indicated that the grace and blessings of the Satguru ji was on Baba ji.

The first thirty-nine years of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji’s life were spent in carrying out the orders of his father with humility and surrender. He was the perfect Gursikh one could ask for.

Mastan Garh

The emerald green fields, the majestic banyan and fig trees, the beautiful flowering gardens and the neelgai which shy away from visitors to hide amidst the trees and paddy fields, make up Mastan Garh of today. This is a paradise created by Satguru Jagjit Singh ji after he ascended the throne in 1959. The lush paddy fields stretch till the horizon and the best quality basmati rice grows in these fields. The pure Sahiwal, Tharparkar and Haryana breeds of cows are raised in the goshaalas. Big desi bulls, cows and tiny calves are safe and happy, roaming around, drinking water, resting under the green trees, eating fodder to their fill. One feels reassured that all the precious Namdhari blood shed for cow protection has not gone in vain.

The creation of this Utopia was not an easy task. At first Mastan Garh was like a jungle. The land had to be cleared for cultivation. Whenever the Satguru gave a call, volunteers would come in hundreds to work with him. He took the initiative to build village roads and houses for farmers.

An embankment was built through Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's effort, on river Ghaggar, which previously would inundate the crops when flooded. The farmers benefited by Satguru ji's vision. When the land was bought, only wild berries used to grow on the soil. Satguru ji sent the soil for fertility tests and planned to develop fruit orchards. He encouraged the farmers to grow grape vines, kinnows and sweet oranges. This diversification of crops initiated by Satguru ji increased the income of small farmers. Mata Chand Kaur ji, wife of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, played an important role during this time and with the volunteers, built the concrete pillars needed for the cultivation of grape vines.



The emerald green fields of Mastan Garh

Leveling of the sand dunes and regaining of land for cultivation is another achievement of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. Today the green fields stretch for miles together on both sides of the road to Sri Jiwan Nagar with yield that is among the highest in India. As a reminder of the original desert-like landscape, only one

sand dune stands in Tibba farm. This lone tibba is green with colourful flowers and exotic trees and it was the favourite haunt of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, who observed jap paryog on this holy mound. The greenery on the sand dune proves the truth that the land where the Satguru steps turns fertile and fruitful.

There was a lighter side to the Sri Jiwan Nagar experiences which brings out the joy of living and fun, which the migrants, Baba ji, and his team shared. Satguru Partap Singh ji had bought a four-seater aeroplane to travel between Sri Bhaini Sahib and Sri Jiwan Nagar as the roads were rough during those days. Maharaj Bir Singh ji and Gurdev Singh ji would pilot it.

One day, Master Amrik Singh got into the aircraft and tried to “fly” it. To his dismay, the aircraft roared but would not budge. He tried switching off the engine and failed miserably. Baba ji who was around came running and stopped the engine. Everyone had a hearty laugh. Baba ji too could not fly the aircraft and with Master Amrik Singh seated beside him, he “drove” it on the ground. This aircraft was a centre of attraction for the youth and often a matter of envy too.

There was a peasant by name Amar Singh who used to ride a donkey and would announce:

“Leaving Sri Jiwan Nagar now. Reaching Sirsa and departing to destination Sri Bhaini Sahib.”

When this was reported to Baba ji, he took the young peasant for a joyride in the aircraft.

Satguru Partap Singh ji's Contribution to Spirituality

When Satguru Partap Singh ji ascended the throne in 1906, he had the immense task of creating a unique Namdhari Sikh identity. He had to strengthen the religious fervour and faith ignited in the hearts of the Namdharis by the previous Gurus.

From 1923 onwards, the British rulers relaxed the restrictions imposed on the Namdharis and Satguru Partap Singh ji speeded the pace of religious and spiritual activities. It was during this time that Satguru Partap Singh ji urged the Namdharis to perform their daily one hour naam simran and follow the maryada strictly. He was so firm with his sangat that if any Namdhari failed in his duty, he was called to confess his sin in front of the sangat and seek the pardon of the Guru.

Some of Satguru Partap Singh ji's discourses indicate how the Guru instilled the fear of God and the dire consequences if the sangat did not follow the maryada. It may sound mundane but Satguru ji's discourses attend to minute details of everyday life.

He asked Namdhari mothers to get up early in the morning and bathe the children from head to toe. The Guru repeated the benefits of the Namdhari Sikh way of life and told them to wear white clothes and the white round turban. He prohibited them from drinking tea, eating paan, smoking, consuming non vegetarian food and alcohol. He advised the women to avoid being fashionable and asked them to wear Namdhari attire. He asked them not to cover their faces with a veil. The Satguru ji did not approve of women and children wasting their time watching films. Instead, he motivated them to contemplate and meditate on the naam and read the Gurbani.

Satguru ji's updesha to the Namdharis settled in Thailand shows a special concern for the expatriates that they should not be corrupted by the ways of the world. He tells them to eat only homemade food and use water from natural sources. He says:

“Avoid taking food from non-vegetarian shops.”

Satguru Partap Singh ji advised Namdharis abroad to live in amity with Sikhs, Hindus and other Indians and to celebrate festivals together. He kept repeating to them that the polluted mind can only be purified by the naam. He spoke of the love for the motherland and love for the cows.

It was a practice among the Namdharis living abroad to come in large numbers in their cars to the airport and receive the Guru. They spent lavishly on welcoming him. Satguru Partap Singh ji advised them against extravagance and said:

“Instead of wasting money on pomp and show, save it and donate it to your brothers in India.”

That was the time of Partition and the advice of the Satguru paid rich dividends. The devotees from Thailand sent clothes and financially supported the Sikhs in Punjab.

It was during Satguru Partap Singh ji's time that lakhs of akhand paaths and paaths of Dasam Granth Sahib ji were performed. The annual jap paryog was established firmly during his time. A great havan yajna with recitation of 1,25,000 verses of Chandi di Vaar was completed twice during the period of Satguru Partap Singh ji.

Baba ji, who grew up listening to his father's updes, internalised this spiritual fervour and realized that sincere faith in naam and Satguru empowers an individual. Satguru Partap Singh ji told Baba ji that even if he had to sell all their property, the Gurbani paath should never be stopped. It had been started for the welfare of the Namdhari community and the return of Satguru Ram Singh ji. Even today, at Sri Jiwan Nagar and Sri Bhaini Sahib these Gurbani paaths continue.

Satguru Partap Singh ji and social reforms

Satguru Partap Singh ji's contribution on the social front is remarkable. He realized that Sikhs and Hindus wasted a lot of money in observing religious rituals, festivals and ceremonies. An ordinary peasant incurs heavy expenditure while conducting the wedding of his children. To prevent this, the Sikh Anand Marriage Act was passed on 20 October, 1909 and Satguru ji played a major role in it.

Satguru Partap Singh ji married Bibi Bhupinder Kaur on 27 December, 1914 and the wedding was solemnized according to Gursikhi Anand Karaz Maryada. This marriage system was founded by Satguru Ram Singh ji in 1863. The wedding is performed with the couple walking around the holy fire four times while four Lavan are recited from Anand Sahib, the holy scripture. No other Vedic rituals are observed.

The Satguru passed an order that all Namdharis should henceforth perform the marriage in the gurdwara in front of the sangat. They were prohibited from giving or accepting dowry and they were to take food at the langar. This Anand marriage system saved a number of peasants from debt and financial burden.

Satguru Partap Singh ji was aware of the need for the spiritual and cultural education of Namdhari children and women. Under his patronage, his younger

brother, Maharaj Gurdial Singh ji, started a weekly magazine in Punjabi titled Satjug on 21st May, 1920. This weekly magazine carried articles on Namdhari history, culture and promoted Punjabi language and literature. Satjug is set to celebrate its centenary soon.

The Namdhari Vidyalyas were started in Sri Bhaini Sahib and Sri Jiwan Nagar to provide holistic education to children. On the request of Satguru Partap Singh ji's wife, Mata Bhupinder Kaur, Namdhari women were allowed to participate in the jap paryog. Satguru ji encouraged widow remarriages and banned the killing of the girl child. In the economic sphere, Satguru Partap Singh ji promoted self-employment and cooperative farming. If any dispute arose among the Namdharis, he advised them to approach the Namdhari panchayats and Subas and to avoid the British courts to save money, time and dignity.

Satguru Partap Singh ji trained his son, Baba ji, in the cauldron called life. While Baba ji's childhood was spent among saints and sages, his teens were spent in the company of his father, scholars and musicians at Sri Bhaini Sahib. He was fascinated by his father's charismatic personality and imbibed the qualities of leadership from him. Baba ji was aware of his father's stature not only as the leader of Namdharis but also as a national leader.

Satguru Partap Singh ji was a powerful spiritual Master who, at times of political and cultural turmoil, was able to create a mass movement in Punjab and forged Namdharis into a proud, patriotic, economically and spiritually empowered community.

Baba ji observed how his father dealt with the British and the Congress without compromising on the principles of nonviolence and peace.

Satguru Partap Singh ji had carved a place for himself in the history of the Indian freedom struggle and when British India disintegrated, Satguru Partap Singh ji succeeded in building his empire of disciplined and devout Namdharis. When the revolutionary leader, Bhagat Singh, was executed, Satguru Partap Singh ji boldly spoke against the British and sent Sant Mangal Singh to console the family. These fearless acts of the father influenced and impressed Baba ji to whom his father was

the role model to emulate. The father too was moved by the son's love and devotion and once told him:

“You are my son as well as a friend.”

It was the highest tribute a disciple could receive from a Satguru. What Bhai Lehna was to Guru Nanak, Baba ji was to Satguru Partap Singh ji. Baba ji spent the first thirty-nine years of his life as the most obedient and ideal disciple of his father, Satguru Partap Singh ji.

Satguru Partap Singh ji was like a volcano invoking awe and reverence while Baba ji was like the snow clad mountain, cool and calm. The aura enveloping Satguru Partap Singh ji overwhelmed people so much that they maintained a respectful distance from him. On the other hand, Baba ji was like a magnet attracting all; even birds and animals could not resist his charm. Yet, the truth is both the father and the son were like two sides of the same coin - bonded by the same values and vision seekers of Truth for whom seva was the goal of life.



3 CHAPTER



Satguru, the Spiritual Powerhouse

ਆਪ ਜਪੈ ਅਵਰਹ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪਾਵੈ ਵਡ ਸਮਰਥ ਤਾਰਨ ਤਰਨ ॥

Ap japai avrah nam japavai vad samrath taran taran.

He Himself chants, and inspires others to chant the Name of the Lord.

He is all powerful; He shows the way to salvation.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the spiritual powerhouse, inspired millions of his disciples and devotees living all over the world to tread the path of devotion and service. His Holiness showed them the way to a life of fulfilment and happiness. A rich legacy of spiritual well-being is his gift to the Namdhari sangat. The five decades of Patsha ji's reign from 1959 to 2012 constitutes the golden era of Namdhari Sikhs.

Disciples and devotees of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji considered him God in human form, an avatarpurush. Many miracles were associated with him, even though he attributed them all to the power of Akal Purakh.

Many worshipped this living Guru as their saviour. Among his disciples were the mightiest rulers as well as the most neglected sections of society. What was the secret of his divinity?

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was first and foremost a perfect Sikh who lived the values he preached and there was no gap between his words and actions. His life was an illustration of total submission to the will of God and surrender at the feet of the Satguru. He saw God in all living beings and serving them with love and humility was his Dharma. He could bring people close to God because he was close to Him. Sincerity and truth were the hallmarks of this divine personality. Since he was a perfect Sikh, he was a paripoorna Guru also.

Patsha ji on naam simran and jap

As a child of five, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji could read and recite the Gurbani in perfect diction. He grew up in the company of holy men like Mahant Kesar Singh ji, Baba Chanda Singh ji and Sant Takhat Singh ji. These men left an indelible mark on his personality. He imbibed the values of devotion and discipline from them. Chanting and meditating on the name of God was a way of life with them and Patsha ji made this his own.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji followed the path shown by his father Satguru Partap Singh ji and other Satgurus who preceded him. He drew strength from the Namdhari Sikh spiritual heritage handed down by Satguru Ram Singh ji. Patsha ji believed in the tradition of the living Guru yet was tolerant towards other sects of Sikhism and other religions. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji said:

“The concept of a Satguru as projected by the Gurbani is clearly that of a living Satguru. As Sikhs, our objectives should be to tread on the path that such a Satguru ordains. In doing so, if anyone is offended, we should perform ardaas to Satguru ji that they may be blessed and may calmness prevail over them. We should not harbour hatred towards them nor should we feel offended by them.”

Satguru Jagjit ji's words indicate that he believed firmly in the tenets of his religion but was tolerant of others' opinions and views. In one of his discourses titled "All Faiths", Patsha ji said:

"One can resolve all religious disputes if one follows the tenets of one's own religion while respecting other religions."

He further stated:

"It does not matter to which religion you belong. You may be a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or a Sikh. But be a good human being and do good to others."



Satguru ji and
Mata ji at naam simran

Satguru ji travelled extensively in India and abroad and spread the word of God. People thronged to hear his discourses, which brought comfort and solace to them. He based his teachings on the Gurbani and embellished them with everyday experiences, episodes and moral stories. He lived his life in accordance with the teachings of the Gurbani.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's presence in the Asa di Vaar or morning congregational prayers drew devotees in large numbers. He advised them to be on time and would be very punctual himself. Seated amidst the sangat, he looked every inch a spiritual emperor. Patsha ji listened with great concentration and devotion to the kirtans rendered by the raagis. He often led and participated in the kirtan.

Patsha ji used to play the recorded discourses of Satguru Partap Singh ji to the sangat. These discourses stressed on the importance of naam simran and maryada, which all Namdharis have to follow strictly. Naam simran and recitation of Gurbani form an important aspect of Namdhari Sikhism.

Patsha ji advised the sangat to take up earnestly jap paryog, the month-long meditation for the return and blessings of Satguru Ram Singh ji. This religious practice was started during Satguru Partap Singh ji's time and continues till day. It invests the entire Namdhari sangat with a special spiritual energy and purpose.

Disciples observe jap paryog voluntarily with great reverence and enthusiasm. It demands rigorous self-discipline. One has to wake up as early as one o'clock in the morning, take a head-to-toe bath and sit for long hours of meditation. Those who perform jap paryog meditate on the naam for eight hours, preferably in the gurdwara. The rest of the day is spent in reading the Gurbani and performing seva.

Due to Patsha ji's efforts, Namdharis residing all over the world, young and old, took to performing jap paryog. Even professionals like engineers, lawyers and doctors living in India and abroad undertake this spiritual practice and reap rich harvest in terms of peace and prosperity. This forty-day sadhana ends in an annual fair in which members of the community gather and seek the blessings of the Satguru. This tradition is growing stronger day by day.

Patsha ji stressed the importance of chanting the name of God and urged that on no grounds should this be neglected or discontinued. Patsha ji said that since the time of Guru Nanak, the emphasis of Sikhism has been on fighting the enemy within and gain inner strength and peace. The tools to achieve this are naam and devotion to Satguru.

Chanting the Lord's name cleans the mind of anger, jealousy and hatred. Meditation stills the thoughts and directs the mind towards God. Patsha ji said:

“Just as a tabla or dilruba has to be tuned, the mind has to be tuned towards God. It takes some time for the mind to get attached to Him.”

The secret to get attached to His naam is to remember Him always. Patsha ji would say:

“Chant the Lord's name while grinding the wheat, while sitting in the shop, while riding a bicycle or travelling in a car. Chant naam with deep concentration. Let it seep into your subconscious mind. Do not leave the mind idle... like a bumble bee returns to the honey, let the mind always return to God's feet.”

Patsha ji said that mechanical counting of beads and rolling of jap mala was not enough, one has to call the name of the God with love and devotion.

With a sense of humour, Patsha ji used to say:

“An air conditioner keeps you cool during summer, a heater keeps you warm during winter. But it is the naam which keeps you happy and comfortable during all seasons all through your life.”

Patsha ji knew the difficulties of discharging one's religious duties during modern times. He said:

“It is difficult to perform long and arduous penance during Kaliyug as we are constantly battling with vices and the age is not conducive for devotion to God... In spite of it, if we are able to continue our jap and naam simran, we are truly the blessed souls.”

Very often disciples complained to Patsha ji that they were unable to concentrate during meditation. Patsha ji, quoting from his father's discourse, explained to them the nature of the human mind:



“The human mind is like a monkey which needs to be trained. There are two types of monkeys, an unchained mischievous one that jumps around and causes destruction and a chained one, which is playful but does not cause destruction. Similarly, though the mind wanders, meditation at least chains it to a righteous cause.”

Patsha ji elaborated on the steps which lead to fruitful meditation. He said one should try to focus the mind on the image of Satguru Ram Singh ji with a deep desire to receive His Holy presence. If this image of the Guru has to become ours, the mind should be pure. One should not harbour any hatred towards others and should clean the mind of anger, jealousy and lust. This is possible through meditation, when we introspect and turn inward. Instead, we often end up inspecting others and get more and more entangled in unwanted criticism of others.

When a disciple gives his mind to God, He in return gives him peace and happiness.

Once, a disciple told Patsha ji that he could not sit for meditation for a long time. Patsha ji asked him:

“For how long do you sit?”

The disciple answered:

“May be for half an hour.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji told the disciple that a mind which can focus on God for half an hour is better than a mind that is running wild and free. He assured the disciple that with practice his mind would become steady and move towards God.

To quote Patsha ji:

“The mind is very fickle... we need to rein it in and make it steady. A steady mind empowers us, it allows us to focus on all aspects of life including studies and worldly activities.”

These words of Patsha ji had a great impact on students and youth, who were motivated to meditate.

Patsha ji spoke on the benefits of meditating on the naam.

“Only naam can purify the mind which is polluted by sin. It is the only truth which will be our companion in life and even after death.”

Patsha ji quoted from the Gurbani:

ਜਿਹ ਮਾਰਗ ਕੇ ਗਨੇ ਜਾਹਿ ਨ ਕੋਸਾ ॥

Jih marag ke gane jahi na kosa.

On that endless path after death where the miles cannot be counted

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਉਹਾ ਸੰਗਿ ਤੋਸਾ ॥

Har ka nam uha sang tosa.

There, the Name of the Lord shall be your sustenance.

ਜਿਹ ਪੈਡੈ ਮਹਾ ਅੰਧ ਗੁਬਾਰਾ ॥

Jih paidai maha andh gubara.

On that journey of total, pitch-black darkness

ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਸੰਗਿ ਉਜੀਆਰਾ ॥

Har ka nam sang ujiara.

The Name of the Lord shall be the Light with you.

Patsha ji advised the disciples to chant the naam with love and humility and accept whatever comes their way as the will of God.

Naam simran had become Satguru ji's breath. Naam was rooted in his subconscious mind and he had become one with it. This made it possible for his mind to be at peace and shower this peace on all living beings. No wonder Patsha ji could sit composed and calm on the green lawns of Sri Bhaini Sahib and feed parsad to the peacock as if it were his child.

There is a classic photograph capturing this moment of supreme love. The peacock pecks at the pieces of roti from Patsha ji's hand and he fondly looks on like a mother feeding her infant. This is the moment when all walls break down and the self merges with the divine.



Patsha ji narrated a story to illustrate the protective powers of the naam. There is a particular species of bird, which lays eggs high up in the mountains. Only those baby birds, which the mother bird remembers to feed, survive. Others perish for want of nourishment. Similarly, only those who remember and call God will be protected and saved by Him.

Patsha ji insisted that everyone should perform at least one hour naam simran daily. Patsha ji said:

“Constant chanting of God’s name can melt down the mountain of sins; it can ferry us across the ocean of existence; it can liberate us from the cycle of birth and death. Only those who chant the naam know its sweetness.”

Patsha ji, the Apostle of Peace

Patsha ji was an ambassador of peace in more ways than one. He ushered in the era of peace and prosperity for Namdharis. He was a votary of peace and said that it has to be attained at any cost. He was pained to see that the world was torn apart by two World Wars and the bitter memories of Partition had left an indelible mark on Patsha ji’s mind.

Patsha ji’s views on peace are based on the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib and the preachings of the previous Satgurus. In one of his discourses, Satguru Partap Singh ji had condemned politicians who talk about peace but continue to invent more and more powerful bombs to exterminate the world in minimum time.

The Satguru never missed an opportunity to impress on world leaders the need for disarmament and said that powerful nations should lead the way and dump all their nuclear weapons in the ocean. He said that only a person who is at peace with himself can spread peace in the world. Acceptance of others as they are and tolerance towards other religions and cultures was central to his philosophy of life. He subscribed to Guru Gobind Singh ji’s views:

“Some are Hindus, some are Muslims, some are rafjis, imams and sufis. But all belong to one race called humanity.”

According to the Satguru, if we follow the teachings of Guru Nanak, all the quarrels in the world will end.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji said:

“We should get together in the form of sadh sangat regularly. We must not harbour ill feelings or negativity against others. We must try to rise above personal grudges. We should pray to Satguru to relieve us of the burden of jealousy, hatred and animosity so that we can have peace of mind and happiness.”

Patsha ji was of the view that man’s material and technological advancement is remarkable but it is of no use if the person sits in an air-conditioned room and is burning with jealousy about another’s achievement or prosperity.

Cleaning the mind of kaam, krodh and other baser instincts is the first step towards attaining inner peace. Naam simran, seva and surrender at the feet of the Guru purifies the mind. Such a mind can spread its happiness to the outer world.

Patsha ji brought a spiritual perspective to the World Peace Summits where he was a very respected leader. He laid the foundation of the Temple of Peace in Rajburi, Thailand on 19th October, 1978 and observed that silence and non-violence are signs of peace and happiness.

At the World Peace Summit held in the Assembly Hall of the United Nations Organisation (UNO) at New York in August 2000, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji addressed two thousand leaders from ninety countries. His message for world peace was:

“We must donate something from our rights; we should never snatch others rights; but should rather guard the rights of others. This approach will end all quarrels in the world.”

When some religious leaders asked Patsha ji:

“Why do you join hands with Russians, atheists and Communists for world peace?”

Patsha ji answered:

“When your house is burning, if a Communist or a Muslim brings water to put out the fire, would you reject his gesture and let your house burn?”

He perceived that world peace was the collective responsibility of all human beings.

Patsha ji used to quote from the Gurbani:

“O Nanak! When you forsake your ego and remain humble, you attain all the happiness and peace.”

This is what the entire world is seeking. Patsha ji asks:

“When Guru Nanak Dev has given us the formula to attain peace, still why is it difficult to achieve this?”

Patsha ji answers his own question:

“It is our attachment to this world. It is the illusion or maya, which prevents us from attaining peace.”

He said naam and ego are enemies and maya and ego are friends. Hence if we make naam our friend, ego will vanish and we can attain peace.

Instead of indulging in gossip, slander and jealousy, Patsha ji wants us to seek the meaning of life and attain spiritual success.

Satguru ji used to tell the disciples:

“Find out the meaning and aim of human life; assess how far you have achieved these and how would you make your life a spiritual success. The Gurbani and the Guru show the way.

Jap Tap Kaa Bandh Berhula Jit Lange Vahela

Build a raft of penance and naam to carry you across the ocean of life.”

Patsha ji advised the devotees on attaining a balanced mind which accepts the pain and pleasures of life as the will of God. The Satguru followed what he preached. He said death of the near ones will not devastate disciples when they accept it as the will of God. When Satguru ji's first wife Mata Rajinder Kaur ji passed away due to a sudden illness, he was just a twenty-five-year-old young man. Satguru ji had to be carried to the river bank where she was cremated as he had hurt his ankle and the wound was very painful. Seeing his pain, his mother-in-law, Jagat Kaur ji said:

“It must be hurting you a lot.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji replied:

“This wound is not so deep as the one I have suffered now (referring to his wife's death). Yet, I have tolerated that. One has to bear everything bestowed by the Creator.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji used to say that we have to “sell” our mind to the Satguru to attain spiritual success.

ਮਨੁ ਬੇਚੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

Man Baechai Sathigur Kai Paas ||

One who sells his mind to the True Guru

ਤਿਸੁ ਸੇਵਕ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਰਾਸਿ ॥

This Saevak Kae Kaaraj Raas ||

- that humble servant's affairs are resolved.

This is very difficult because it involves many physical challenges, which are demanding, such as waking up early every day, bathing and performing nitnem.

Patsha ji said that the path of spirituality demanded total dedication. He illustrated this through a comparison.

“First we learn the alphabet, slowly we develop the skill of joining the letters to form words. Using these words, we communicate, read books and become lawyers, teachers, doctors. In order to achieve this, we need to completely dedicate

our minds to the learning process. Similarly, if we wish to pursue the path of Sikhi, first we should dedicate our minds to the Satguru.”

The Gurbani says that another obstacle which prevents the mind from surrendering is the ego. Only seva to Guru and sangat can help us get rid of our ego, says the Satguru. Among the Sikhs, cleaning the used plates and utensils is an important seva because as you wash the outer dirt away, the inner dirt, the ego, slowly vanishes. Patsha ji says:

“In our daily life, we submit before the rich and the powerful for personal gains. In fact, we buy peace with our wives and children by surrendering our ego. But surrender to our beloved Satguru is above all these surrenders. Here, we should totally forget the ‘I’.”

Nishaan Singh ji, the eminent Namdhari preacher, says:

“Satguru Jagjit Singh ji carried out Satguru Partap Singh ji’s orders with total submission. He never took credit for any work that he executed. He never said ‘I’ or ‘Mine’.”

Total surrender means acceptance of God’s will. To remain composed and stable under all circumstances is an indication of an egoless mind. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji explained this through an illustration:

“A cycle has two tyres. If one of the tyres is removed, the cycle loses its balance. Similarly, life is a cycle of happiness and misery, positives and negatives. We should accept both in equanimity as the will of God.”

One day, Patsha ji offered a toffee to a tiny toddler. Joyfully, the child came running with an outstretched hand. Patsha ji withdrew his hand and hid the toffee behind his back. The child quietly went back to its mother.

After a few seconds, Patsha ji again held the sweet and beckoned the child. The child, with the same smiling face, came running towards Patsha ji, who again

withdrew the hand and hid the toffee. The child went back to the mother and sat down quietly.

Patsha ji continued the game. He held the toffee the third time. Again, the child rushed to him with the same sense of joy and spirit. This time, Patsha ji picked up the child with affection and gave the toffee to the happy child.

This episode illustrates the attitude we should adopt in life. Many a time when we face disappointments and failures, we blame others, including God, for our unhappiness and failures and hold grudges against them. But the child who was denied the toffee two times, rushed to Patsha ji with the same sense of joy and expectation every time, till he got the toffee.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji repeatedly told the Namdhari parents that they have the responsibility of providing spiritual guidance to their children. They should see that children perform naam simran and read the Gurbani. He said Namdhari children may aspire to become doctors, engineers, writers and businessmen but first and foremost they have to become Sikhs. Being a Sikh is a greater achievement than any profession.

When certain people compromised on their Sikh identity to obtain jobs and material gains, Patsha ji used to be pained. He recalled how once a person accompanied him to the Home Ministry and on seeing the minister this person paid obeisance by touching the minister's shoes. Patsha ji said:

“People want to be humble in front of powerful persons with the hope of reaping some benefit in future. We should not sell our dignity for such gains. Instead, we should surrender to saints, Gurus and God without expecting any reward.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji narrated an incident which took place during the time of his father Satguru Partap Singh ji.

Once a young man came to Satguru Partap Singh ji and said:

“I have been doing naam simran for some time but I have not benefited from it.”

Satguru Partap Singh ji asked him:

“For how long have you been doing jap?”

“Two months,” said the youngster.

Satguru ji replied:

“Young man, you have spent sixteen years in school and college to procure a post graduate degree. But in the case of naam simran you have no patience to wait. How do you expect the prayers to yield results within two months? You need to love God and call Him sincerely. He will respond to your prayers.”

Spiritual Activities

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji always stressed that the Namdhari community’s progress in economic and social sphere is founded on its spiritual strength. Under his guidance the following spiritual feats were accomplished.

One lakh twenty-five thousand recitations of Sri Adi Granth Sahib were performed thrice during the time of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. Patsha ji organized one lakh twenty-five thousand recitations of Chandi Di Vaar and held havans five times. His Holiness increased the number of Akhand Varnis to sixteen from the two started by Satguru Partap Singh ji.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji also expanded the annual jap paryog in different parts of the world including India, Thailand, Africa, England, Germany, America, Canada and Australia. Patsha ji started continuous naam, jap paryog in Sri Bhaini Sahib for the return of Satguru Ram Singh ji.

Patsha ji used to take part in all these spiritual activities and set an example for others to emulate. He would get up at one o’clock in the morning and start meditation at two o’clock and then attend the Asa Di Vaar at four o’clock.



He used to recite baanis everyday. He made it compulsory for all Namdharis to do one hour of naam simran daily. Each family had to perform one paath of Adi Granth Sahib or Dasam Granth Sahib every month. He said the community's prosperity is directly linked with their spiritual empowerment.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji visited the Namdhari sangat scattered all over the world and inspired them to follow the maryada and promote the values of peace and co-existence in alien lands. During his time, several Hola Melas were held in all parts of India and abroad.

On the banks of the Holy Ganga



Satguru ji at Asa di Vaar





Vegetarianism

Patsha ji followed and promoted vegetarianism with missionary zeal. Once Patsha ji had gone to the studio of All India Radio (AIR) to record an interview. After the interview, just before leaving, Patsha ji advised the anchor:

“Please give up eating meat and become a vegetarian.”

He quoted from scriptures to show how killing animals for our own pleasure and taste is wrong. He used to say:

“Imagine if animals began to kill and eat us!”

Patsha ji quoted from the Gurbani and said that meat eating is not allowed in Sikhism.

Once, a lion caught a goat and the goat began to laugh. The lion asked the goat why he was laughing. The goat replied:

“I eat only grass and look at my fate. What will be the condition of you who is killing others and eating meat?”

Before Independence, cows were transported to Calcutta for slaughter. Patsha ji would go with a group of young men and buy those cows and send them to Sri Bhaini Sahib or Sri Jiwan Nagar to be taken care of.

Many a time, Patsha ji brought cows which would be old, beyond the age of yielding milk or working on the farm. When someone questioned him why he bought those cows which would yield him nothing, Patsha ji answered:

“One day, your parents will grow old. Will you sell them or drive them out? Is it not your duty to take care of them?”

Patsha ji continued:

“I don’t keep accounts with the cow because the cow gives me milk without keeping accounts.”

According to Patsha ji, protecting cows is not a matter of loss or profit, it is a moral obligation.

He protected the pure Indian breeds of cows from hybridisation. He used to buy Nagauri bullocks from Nagaur fair in Rajasthan to maintain the tradition of cultivation with bullocks. He preserved Sahiwaal and Haryana breed of cows in his goshalas. These are considered as one of the best milk yielders.

Patsha ji believed in go seva, not go puja. He believed in serving the cow, not merely worshipping it. The love he showered on the cows is remarkable. Whenever Patsha ji visited the goshala he would call the cows by their names. The cows would respond to the call of this Gopala and the respective calves too would run towards him. He would feed the cows and the calves with jaggery. No wonder Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was bestowed with the “Gopal Ratna” award. Who could have deserved the title of Gopala more than Patsha ji?

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji’s firm faith in non-violence was based on the view that we have no right to kill a living being created by God. He would not kill even an insect. Patsha ji would carry a handkerchief with him to drive away insects.

Once it was a cold winter night and the temperature was very low. An insect had entered Patsha ji's room and was disturbing him during prayers.

Patsha ji told the aide:

“It is very cold outside. Catch it and leave it in the next room, do not throw it out.”

His was a soul which could empathise with the tiny insect and feel its pain.

During the annual jap paryog, which was performed during monsoons, many moths would get attracted to the lights and lose their lives. To prevent this, Patsha ji shifted the annual meditation to a time when there would be less insects around. For Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, to live in harmony with all living beings was the aim of life.

Patsha ji participated in several conferences on vegetarianism. Addressing the audience of the 34 World Vegetarian Conference held at Toronto, Canada, in July 2000, he said:

“Peace and vegetarianism are interlinked. If there is violence against living beings there cannot be peace in the world. We should think not only for the welfare of human beings but also for the well being of animals.”

Satguru ji respected the right to life of all living beings. There were a few ponds near Namdhari farms at Urakahalli, near Bidadi on the outskirts of Bangalore. In spite of repeated requests to refrain from fishing, the villagers used to fish in the ponds. Patsha ji bought the fishing rights for those ponds and prevented the villagers from fishing.

At Nilo Nehar Dera, located near Sirhind Canal, which is eight kilometres from Sri Bhaini Sahib, a big snake used to live inside the pot, where the dal meant for the langar, was stored. The cook, who had to take the dal, would tell the cobra:

“Shriman Cobra, let us have our dal.”

The Namdhari cook would not harm it and the cobra would go away. It was a case of peaceful co-existence.

Satguru ji on Charity

Being charitable, serving the community, especially the poor and needy, are some of the highest moral values that Satguru ji teaches us. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji would say:

“We reap what we sow. If we sow the seeds of slander, gossip and hatred, we will reap the same. Let’s try to sow the seeds of goodness and charity and walk on the path of our beloved Satguru ji.”

He advised the sangat to contribute the daswand:

“Everyone can donate according to his or her capacity.”

Patsha ji was never attached to material possessions. Even as a child, we are told, that whenever people offered him a rupee or two, he would give it away in charity.

Once Pritam Singh Kavi ji, a childhood friend of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, chided Patsha ji:

“You scatter money with a tangli. I don’t know how you can do this.”

Satguru ji replied:

“I am just a medium. I am neither happy when money comes to me nor sad when it leaves me. It is maya.”

When someone approached Patsha ji for some monetary help saying that he would return the amount later, Patsha ji told him:

“I will give you the money on condition that you will not return it.”

Patsha ji often said that in today’s age, most of us aspire to have beautiful houses, cars and other material possessions. When we acquire these, if we acknowledge that it is the Satguru ji’s blessings which have made this possible, we are on the

right path. On the other hand, if we think that we have acquired wealth because of our own intelligence, then we are wrong.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji stressed on the infinite power of Akal Purakh. He told his followers that even great researchers do not understand how an egg fertilises into life. But Akal Purakh is the Lord of this wonderful creation.

Ordinary men and women cannot and do not comprehend the power of God and are not even ready to believe in it because it is not within their experience. Only a Satguru who experiences the truth and reality of God can show the way to Him. Those who surrender at the feet of the gurus like Satguru Jagjit Singh ji can get a glimpse of the divine.

Satguru ji was aware that in today's world of complexities, people will find it difficult to follow the maryada prescribed by Namdhari Sikhism. Yet, he said that it is the duty of the sangat to follow the given code, for their own spiritual well being.

Satguru ji compares the strict observance of maryada to the treatment given in traditional medicine to a person who is diagnosed with diabetes. The patient is administered bitter neem to eliminate excess sugar in the blood. In the same way, the hukamnamas of Satguru ji may appear bitter but only these orders of the Satguru can counter the negative effects of the five evils of kaam, krodh, madh, lobh and moh and ferry the jeeva across the ocean of life. Only then, the 'soul bride' can join 'the Lord,' her husband.





4 CHAPTER



Music - The Divine Gift

ਰਾਗੁ ਨਾਦੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਚੁ ਹੈ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਕਹੀ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥

Raag naad sabh sach hai kimat kahi na jae.

Raag and divine music are true; they are priceless, their value cannot be expressed.

“The Sikh holy books say that music brings one closer to God and it is invaluable. Without music, one cannot fathom the will of God.”

-Satguru Jagjit Singh ji

Devotional music is an integral part of Sikhism. When Guru Nanak and Bhai Mardana with his rabab roamed on the face of earth, singing the glory of God, Gurmat Sangeet was born. Music in Sikhism is a means to reach God and singing kirtans is a mode of worship which tunes the mind towards the Almighty. Many Sikh Gurus were great musicians and the tradition continues with Namdhari Sikh Gurus too.

Both Satguru Partap Singh ji and Satguru Jagjit Singh ji had deep knowledge of Hindustani classical music and Gurmat Sangeet. Namdhari Gurus attach great significance to singing of kirtans during the Asa di Vaar, the morning

congregational prayers. Musicians accompany the Satgurus during their travels to Namdhari sangats all over the world. Devotional music plays a major role in drawing people to God and Guru.

Devotional music was a non-violent weapon used by Satguru Ram Singh ji to unite the Kukas and fight the British rule. In 1872, the British authorities deported Satguru Ram Singh ji to Rangoon. During those days of political turbulence, the Gurbani and naam were the only solace. Satguru Hari Singh ji, the brother of the exiled Spiritual Master, was a patron of Gurmat Sangeet. His Holiness patronised twenty-two pairs of raagis or Gurmat musicians. His son, Satguru Partap Singh ji, who grew up in this atmosphere of devotional music, was also an ardent lover of Hindustani classical music.

Satguru Partap Singh ji's contribution to music



Satguru Partap Singh ji with musicians

After Satguru Partap Singh ji ascended the throne in 1906, he took upon himself the task of reviving and restoring Hindustani classical music to its pristine glory. His Holiness invited maestros of classical music and Gurmat Sangeet to Sri Bhaini Sahib to perform and teach music. Sri Bhaini Sahib became the home of Talwandi Gharana style of singing. Many renowned musicians and rababis stayed in Sri Bhaini Sahib and taught Gurmat Sangeet and classical music.

During the British rule, Indian devotional music suffered due to lack of patronage. The condition of musicians, especially the rababis, was deplorable. They languished in poverty and neglect. Satguru Partap Singh ji took special efforts to locate them, bring them to Sri Bhaini Sahib and took care of all their needs.

Sant Darshan Singh ji and Sant Khajan Singh ji were famous kirtan singers who accompanied Satguru Partap Singh ji during his travels and rendered verses from the Gurbani. Generations of Namdharis grew up listening to their kirtans. Satguru Partap Singh ji used to sing devotional songs both in classical and folk style with cymbals and hand drums. He would render Dhamaar and Punjabi Theka and reach a state of bliss while singing. His Holiness had such deep knowledge of music that he taught many nuances in taal and raag to the students.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji always acknowledged that his innovations in music were due to the inspiration and guidance given by his father. Music was a compulsory subject of study at the Namdhari Gurmat Vidyalya at Sri Bhaini Sahib and Guru Hari Singh Vidyalya at Sri Jiwan Nagar.

Satguru Partap Singh ji and Satguru Jagjit Singh ji realized the importance of preserving the rare compositions sung in traditional raags, which would have been lost, if not learnt and transferred to the new generation of musicians.

From childhood, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji grew up with music and musicians. He started learning classical music at the age of four-and-a-half and remained an avid learner all his life. His happiest moments were in the company of musicians. His father, Satguru Partap Singh ji, was instrumental in nourishing and nurturing this love for music in his sons. Both Patsha ji and Maharaj Bir Singh ji could sing and play the dilruba. The other students of music included Tara Singh ji, Kavi Pritam Singh ji, Pandit Rajinder Singh ji and Seth Hazur Singh Chandrahans ji.

Satguru Partap Singh ji made special efforts to gather a galaxy of Ustads which included Ustad Udho Khan ji from Talwandi Gharana and Ustad Harnam Singh ji, who taught students many rare compositions of music.

Ustad Bhai Taba ji Rababi gave lessons in Gurmat Sangeet and Ustad Mastan Singh taught them dilruba.

Rahim Baksh ji of Talwandi Gharana was the son of Ustad Udho Khan. Satguru Partap Singh ji brought him to Sri Bhaini Sahib and requested him to teach Hindustani vocal music to Patsha ji and friends.

Satguru Partap Singh ji used to monitor the progress of the students. One day, the Satguru heard the children sing and was not satisfied with their performance.

His Holiness told the musician:

“Bhai Rahim Baksh, your heart is not in teaching music, leave it.”

By this, the Satguru did not mean any disrespect to the teacher. He valued the fine art so much that to him music was not a mere hobby or entertainment but divine knowledge which links one to God. He used to very often say that it was the responsibility of every Sikh parent to see that the fragrance of music emanates from their children.

Ironically, some time later, Ustad Udho Khan ji, the father of Rahim Baksh, suffered from severe diarrhoea. Satguru Partap Singh ji brought him to Sri Bhaini Sahib and nursed him back to health. Ustad Udho Khan stayed in Sri Bhaini Sahib for a long time and taught over 250 traditional compositions to Patsha ji and other students. He was very happy with the sincerity with which Patsha ji learnt music from him. Once Satguru Partap Singh ji asked Udho Khan ji:

“Ustad ji, why are you not teaching music to your own grandchildren?”

Udho Khan ji answered:

“I cannot run behind them and teach. If they want music, they should come to me.”

Ustad Mastan Singh was another eminent artist who contributed to the making of Patsha ji, the musician. Satguru Partap Singh ji too learnt dilruba from him. Once while Ustad Mastan Singh was playing the dilruba, the melancholic, emotionally loaded notes reached such divine heights that Satguru Partap Singh ji held the hands of the Ustad and said:

“Ustad ji, please stop playing. This music revives the pangs of separation I feel from Satguru Ram Singh ji. I am unable to bear it anymore.”

While the dilruba was the favourite instrument of Patsha ji, his brother Maharaj Bir Singh ji excelled in playing pakhawaj jori, a traditional percussion instrument. Bhai Nasir ji, the renowned artiste taught pakhawaj jori and tabla to Maharaj Bir Singh ji. Bhai Nasir ji was the disciple of Ustad Miyaan Qadir Baksh.

Patsha ji acknowledged the great role played by his father in grooming him into a musician. At Sri Bhaini Sahib, Satguru Partap Singh ji would sit with the children every day, listen to their singing and mentor them. Satguru ji was particular that the children kept their beats to perfection. He had a metronome machine manufactured, on which the children could count beats. They were trained to sing to the metronome's beat and tempo to perfection.

While on tour, Satguru Partap Singh ji would summon the students to his camp and the music sessions would go on. On one occasion, Satguru Partap Singh ji told Patsha ji:

“Kaka, I have heard many musicians. Nobody sings like you. With more hard work you can reach greater heights.”

Later in life, Patsha ji said:

“If I sing and compose music today, it is due to the blessings of my Satguru.”

Satguru Partap Singh ji organized the first Gurmat Sangeet Sammelan in September 1933 in Sri Bhaini Sahib.

The Partition of India in 1947 dealt a rude blow to the cultural life of Punjab, especially to Gurmat Sangeet. The Golden Temple at Amritsar lost many of its Muslim rababis as they migrated to Pakistan. Satguru Partap Singh ji requested them to stay in India. They did not heed his advice and many decided to move to Pakistan. It looked like the end of the Talwandi Gharana music in India. It was at this juncture that Satguru Partap Singh ji and Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, father and son, took upon themselves the task of gathering the remaining gems of musicians and compositions so that the divine art would not die on the soil of Bharat.

It is sad that many artistes who migrated to Pakistan had to face penury and deprivation. Udho Khan ji was killed by riotous mobs when he was on his way to Pakistan. The story of Bhai Nasir ji, who taught the pakhawaj jori to Maharaj Bir Singh ji is heart rending. Through reliable sources, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji learnt that Bhai Nasir ji was leading a difficult life in Pakistan. Patsha ji told his aides:

“Find out the whereabouts of Bhai Nasir ji.”

The aides found out that in Pakistan Bhai Nasir ji was no longer a musician. He was known as Nasira Mali. He was eking out his livelihood as a gardener and was languishing in the lanes of Anarkali Bazar in Lahore. Satguru ji sent an aide to Lahore to meet the musician. His Holiness stretched a helping hand and brought solace to the artiste.

When Satguru ji came to know that Zulfi, one of the sons of Bhai Nasir ji, desired to come to India to meet Patsha ji, His Holiness made special efforts to procure visa for him. He brought him to Sri Bhaini Sahib and treated him with love and respect and sent him back home with gifts.

Revival of Gurmat Sangeet and Classical Music During Patsha ji's Time

When Satguru Jagjit Singh ji ascended the throne in 1959, during the first few years of his rule, he focused on integrating and consolidating the Namdhari Sangat in national and international spheres. In the mid-1960s, he turned his attention to the teaching of Gurmat Sangeet and classical music as tools of integration and spiritual elevation among the Namdhari youth. He set out to fulfill the wish of his father that all Namdhari children should learn music. This would keep them connected to their culture and religion. Patsha ji said that if one cannot sing or play on the instrument at least he or she should cultivate the culture of listening to good music.

As a first step towards realizing this dream, in 1965, Patsha ji started free music classes in Sri Bhaini Sahib. Any child or adult irrespective of caste or creed could learn music at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Patsha ji revived the Guru Shishya parampara, as learning music was a cultural and spiritual exercise. He wanted the students to imbibe the values of humility and surrender.



Children were taught to sing the Gurbani in the traditional folk and classical style paying great attention to right pronunciation of words. Traditional instruments such as the dilruba, sitar, sarod and rabab along with percussion instruments like pakhawaj jori and tabla were taught. It was Patsha ji's aim to replace harmonium, a Western instrument, by native stringed instruments in Gurmat Sangeet. Guru Arjan Dev ji introduced the tradition of using string instruments including saranda and dilruba in Gurmat Sangeet.

In the early years there were not many students of music. It was a slow but steady increase in the number of learners. Patsha ji made special efforts to bring Pandit Mahadev Prasad, an eminent singer of Jaipur Gharana, to Sri Jiwan Nagar to teach music. Pandit Mahadev ji was living in the Durgiana temple in Amritsar. He could sing both Dhrupad and Khayaal. Mahaveer ji, son of Pandit Mahadev ji, also came to Sri Jiwan Nagar. These masters were repositories of many rare compositions which were becoming extinct.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with younger brother Maharaj Bir Singh ji



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with son-in-law Jagtar Singh ji and daughter Sahib Kaur ji

Patsha ji and Maharaj Bir Singh ji wanted to learn the priceless pieces from Pandit Mahadev Prasad ji. It is said that, with all humility, Patsha ji placed parsad in front of Pandit Mahadev ji and requested him to accept him as a disciple. The first batch of students who learnt music at this time were Ustad Harbhajan Singh, Ustad Gurdev Singh, Surjit Singh Mattu ji and Manjit Singh ji.

Later, respecting the wish of Patsha ji, Ustad Harbhajan Singh taught Gurmat Sangeet and traditional compositions to students while Ustad Mohinder Singh taught khayaal and thumri at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Ustad Pyara Singh trained students in dilruba and taar shehnai and Ustad Nihal Singh instructed the students in pakhawaj jori.

Another prominent musician blessed by Patsha ji is Harbans Singh Ghulla ji. He is the son of Sant Darshan Singh ji and nephew of Sant Khajan Singh ji, the famous kirtan singers. He learnt music from Sant Darshan Singh ji, Ustad Mohinder Singh ji and Ustad Harbhajan Singh ji. Ustad Pyara Singh ji taught him playing dilruba. Ghulla ji accompanied Patsha ji during his travels and performed kirtan in his presence almost for thirty years.

Patsha ji and Maharaj Bir Singh ji were so interested and involved in the growth of students that they too started teaching regularly at Sri Bhaini Sahib. While Sri Bhaini Sahib was emerging as the main centre of learning, Patsha ji promoted learning of music at all Namdhari centres.

Bibi Narinder Kaur, the eminent music teacher, recalls how when Patsha ji visited Nairobi in 1965, the disciples requested:

“Patsha ji, we have heard that you are a treasurehouse of traditional music compositions and we wish to listen to you.”

Patsha ji readily agreed and every evening music sessions were held at the homes of disciples. Patsha ji sang many compositions for them. He asked Narinder Kaur ji:

“Can we create an environment for music in Nairobi?”

This question reveals that for Patsha ji music was a means of holding the sangat together and drawing them closer to God. Further, the 1960s were the time when the strong winds of Westernization were sweeping over the entire world and the youth was drawn to the culture of pop music and cinema. Patsha ji wished to pull the younger generation away from these influences and anchor them in the religious and cultural tradition of Bharat through Indian classical and devotional music.

With the efforts of Patsha ji, in 1970s, a large number of Namdhari youth took to classical music. In 1972, the Namdhari youth organized the first Satguru Partap Singh Sangeet Sammelan in Jammu. Patsha ji and Maharaj Bir Singh ji participated in it. Maharaj ji sang while Patsha ji played on the dilruba. Maharaj Bir Singh ji told Patsha ji:

“It is good that the Namdhari boys of Jammu are holding the music sammelan but we should be organizing it on a larger platform.”

Patsha ji readily agreed and in 1973, Satguru Partap Singh Sangeet Sammelan was organized in Delhi. Many eminent musicians such as Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and Pandit Bhimsen Joshi performed at this event, which was a huge success.

Jagdish Singh Namdhari Waryam ji, the eminent Namdhari writer, recalls the experiences of the group of young Namdhari musicians who travelled from Jammu to Delhi to participate in the sammelan. The musicians were worried as they were coming to Delhi for the first time and did not know how to reach the venue. When the train arrived at the platform they spotted a white round turban in the crowd and felt happy. To their delight, they found more Namdharis on the platform. But they were elated when Patsha ji himself appeared on the scene with marigold garlands to welcome the Namdhari children who were to perform in the sammelan. One of the garlands broke and Patsha ji mended it and wound it round the neck of the child. It was this kind of gesture which made Patsha ji everybody's darling.

After the Delhi sammelan there was no looking back. Satguru Partap Singh Sangeet Sammelan became an annual feature. In Delhi, they were held at Modern School and Kamani Auditorium. Later, these sammelans were held in Lucknow, Mumbai and Aurangabad.

Satguru Uday Singh ji recalls that the sammelan at Aurangabad was a week-long musical festival and the very best. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji and Maharaj Bir Singh ji would themselves perform at these sammelans. Artistes would vie with each other to participate in these music festivals. Music lovers from all over the country were treated to free music and Namdhari hospitality in the form of food and sweets.

The Namdhari children performed so well in the sammelans that they left great artistes like Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Pandit Kishan Maharaj, Ustad Zakir Hussain, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Bismillah Khan and many more renowned artistes amazed. Many were impressed by the silent revolution in music which was taking place in the tiny town of Sri Bhaini Sahib.

Patsha ji and his young students of music stole the hearts of thousands by rendering rare compositions in raags which were so far unheard in the sangeet sabhas. The complex compositions in rare taals presented with ease and felicity by young children left the audience spellbound. Musicians such as Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma and Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia heard these compositions and told Satguru Jagjit Singh ji:

“You have worked magic with these children, please bless us also.”

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan was so impressed with one of the compositions of Patsha ji, set to a rare taal, that he requested the Satguru to teach him this piece. Satguru ji recorded the composition and sent it to the artiste. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan rendered this piece at a concert in Calcutta and acknowledged his indebtedness to the Satguru.

Beyond the boundaries of Sri Bhaini Sahib

By the 1980s, the reputation of Sri Bhaini Sahib as a centre of classical music and Gurmat Sangeet had spread throughout India. During this decade, Patsha ji started sending more and more students outside Sri Bhaini Sahib to learn music at the feet of great masters.

Speaking on Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma said:

“Right from the beginning, what I have noticed about him and his contribution to music is that he selected talented Namdhari children with promise and sent them to good music Gurus. He understood the importance of how to send a shishya to a Guru, how to hand him over. He once called me and said that he would come to Mumbai along with two boys. I said that the boys could come on their own and he need not take the trouble of visiting me. But he insisted on accompanying them. Those two boys stayed in Mumbai for ten years and turned out to be the best among my shishyas. They understood the instrument (santoor).”

The two disciples who made Satguru ji proud are Harjinder Singh and Kiran Pal. Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma ji added:

“If ever anyone plays the santoor the way I do, it is Harjinder Singh.”

Patsha ji’s love and regard for musicians is well known. He held them in high regard and fulfilled all their wishes. He enshrined them in his heart. Balwant Singh, the renowned raagi and disciple of Patsha ji, recalls his experience when Patsha ji sent him to Ustad Vilayat Khan in New Jersey, USA, to learn the sitar and vocal music.

Patsha ji called Balwant Singh and instructed him:

“Balwant, do not go to Khan Sahib with empty hands. First go to the house of Ravinder Singh, a Namdhari gentleman in Philadelphia and tell him that I have sent you to him. He will give you an envelope. Take it with you and when you meet the Ustad, present it to him.”

As instructed, Balwant Singh met the gentleman and collected the envelope. When he reached the Ustad's house he offered pranams and the envelope. The Ustad asked Balwant:

“What is this?”

Balwant Singh replied:

“Patsha ji has sent this to you with his blessings.”

When Ustad Vilayat Khan ji opened the envelope, he was in tears. For Patsha ji had sent one thousand dollars as Guru Dakshina even before the first class had commenced.

Another episode reveals the way in which Patsha ji used to fulfill the wishes of musicians. Before a concert of Ustad Vilayat Khan ji in New York, USA, the artiste called up Patsha ji and sought his blessings.

Patsha ji asked him:

“Ustad ji, what can we do for you?”

The Ustad answered:

“Satguru ji, I wish that the Namdharis residing in the USA would attend the concert.”

Patsha ji instructed Balwant Singh who was at New York studying music at the feet of Vilayat Khan ji:

“Balwant, buy the necessary tickets and give them to the Namdharis residing in the city. Tell them that it is their Satguru's wish that they attend the concert.”

Needless to say, the hall was brimming with Namdharis who are an initiated, interested audience which every artiste values.

Patsha ji had a wonderful relationship with almost all great musicians of his time. How he met the famous sarod maestro Ustad Amjad Ali Khan makes a very interesting story.

In 1967, Patsha ji and Maharaj Bir Singh ji had gone to Delhi to attend the Hola Mela. Patsha ji had heard about Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, the sarod maestro and wanted to listen to him. He conveyed his wish to the Ustad through a musician friend.

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan sent a reply:

“Satguru ji can come to my house at nine in the evening when I am practising and listen to me.”

Patsha ji readily agreed to do so. For this votary of music, nothing stood in the way of appreciation. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan described the first meeting thus:

“At 9 pm, a fleet of cars stopped in front of my house. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, Maharaj Bir Singh ji and some musicians including a tabla artiste, Pandit Prem Vallabh ji, came inside and the session started. I played on, for more than three hours till the Satguru stayed. He appreciated the raag desh.”

Patsha ji was very much impressed by the young artiste’s performance. This was the beginning of a lifelong relationship. He requested Ustad Amjad Ali Khan ji to teach sitar and sarod to two Namdhari disciples, namely Harbhajan Singh and Gurdev Singh. They made Patsha ji and Ustad Amjad Ali Khan proud by their dedication and mastery over the instrument. When a student of music excelled, Patsha ji’s happiness knew no bounds. On one occasion, before a large gathering, Patsha ji said about Gurdev Singh:

“He is the biggest thief, a chor, who has stolen everything from his Guru.”

These words show his large heartedness and genuine love of music. Patsha ji invited Ustad Amjad Ali Khan to Sri Bhaini Sahib and provided an opportunity for other students to interact and learn from him.

Patsha ji always opted for the very best teachers for his students. It was his way of immortalizing the art. A Guru lives in the voice and hands of his shishyas.

Patsha ji sent Kirpal Singh fondly called ‘Palli’, a UK-based Namdhari student, to Ustad Bismillah Khan, the legendary shehnai player to learn taar shehnai. Kirpal came down to India and travelled to Benares with great expectations. As he walked through the narrow alleys of Benares with slaughterhouses and sweet shops on both sides, he wondered why Patsha ji wanted him to undergo this ordeal.

Kirpal recalls that he was deeply disappointed when the Ustad expressed his inability to take him as disciple and asked him to come the following year. Kirpal returned home and came back the following year but the second time too, the Ustad turned him away with some excuse. The third time, Kirpal was determined that he would not move from Benares unless the Ustad accepted him as his disciple.

On his third visit when Kirpal reached Benares, the Ustad was about to take a train to Delhi. Kirpal ran to the railway station, bought a ticket and traveled in the same coach as the Ustad. This journey established the bond between the Guru and the shishya.

Here is a glimpse into one of the learning sessions that would take place on the terrace of Ustad Bismillah Khan’s house in Benares. The great musician would be seated on the charpoy and would ask Kirpal to play the taar shehnai. Hours would go by and the Ustad would drift off to sleep. When Kirpal stopped playing, the Ustad would wake up and order him to continue. Kirpal said:

“The sun would beat down on me and I would continue playing hoping for the rare word of appreciation from the Ustad.”

Patsha ji knew that more than the actual teaching of the notes, one learns by being in the presence of such great masters, who impart the culture of music. The Ustad

illustrated by example how to sit on the stage, how to tune the self and the instrument to perfection.

In 1987, when Satguru Partap Singh Academy was started in Sri Bhaini Sahib, the music classes attracted more students. In this school, Bibi Narinder Kaur ji and Ustad Mohan Singh ji started teaching music. When the number of students increased, Patsha ji appointed a person named Mastana Hardev Singh to supervise and monitor the learning of music. Mastana Hardev Singh was a strict taskmaster. Children were mortally scared of him as he used to beat them if they did not practise music.

Harjinder Singh, a sarod player, recalled how, one day, he and his friends, instead of practising music, were playing in a corner. He said:

“Someone suddenly shouted, ‘Mastana ji is coming, run, run.’ The older children managed to escape. My friend and I tried to scale the wall but could not. Mastana ji pulled us down and gave us a sound thrashing.”

Harjinder Singh, now a music teacher at Sri Bhaini Sahib, says that such discipline was needed at that stage. It also speaks volumes about Patsha ji’s parental care and love. Patsha ji encouraged women to learn music. He said:

“If women learn music, when they become mothers they can teach their children.”

Patsha ji’s daughter, Biba ji, took lessons in classical music from Bibi Narinder Kaur.

Children came from as far as England and Thailand to Sri Bhaini Sahib to learn classical music and Gurmat Sangeet.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Ustad Bismillah Khan



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Pandit Birju Maharaj



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and Subhalakshmi,
watching Balwant Singh playing Namdhari Tarang



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Ustad Zakir Hussain and Ustad Vilayat Khan



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji at the performance of percussionist Sivamani



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji teaching the intricacies of taal to a youngster



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Rajan and Sajjan Mishra



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the versatile musician

Patsha ji as patron of music

After three decades on the throne, Patsha ji was happy to see that the Namdhari Sangat all over the world was on the path of spiritual and material progress. From 1992 onwards Patsha ji started giving increasingly more of his time to music. It is not an exaggeration to say that he lived music, loved music and was music himself. He started the Namdhari Kala Kendra in 1993 in Sri Bhaini Sahib to train children in vocal and instrumental music.

During this time, melodious music reverberated throughout Sri Bhaini Sahib. Over three hundred children learnt music. Music could be heard from every corner of Sri Bhaini Sahib which was like a Gandharva Nagari. Most of the Namdhari children who came to Sri Bhaini Sahib to learn music were from poor farmers' families and there was a popular belief that a peasant's ear cannot be tuned to music. But Patsha ji proved it wrong by grooming these children who had no exposure or background to classical music. All students of music, rich or poor were treated alike and their needs were taken care of by Patsha ji. The education was free of cost but the children had to respect, surrender and serve the Guru.

Balwant Singh recalls the days when Patsha ji's grandson, Jai Singh ji and he learnt santoor together. He says:

“Patsha ji taught us the culture of music - to be respectful and modest. Money was not the criteria for the musician. He should aim for knowledge, devotion and seva. All Namdhari artistes strive to follow the path shown by Satguru ji. Music is priceless. Patsha ji taught us the enormous worth of this divine art.”

Patsha ji said that teaching is a skill and a teacher should be patient as well as demanding. He should be willing to give his knowledge freely to sincere students. Patsha ji was such a charming Guru that all children longed to be in his company. Learning music was the means to please Patsha ji and get close to him. Both the children and the parents knew this secret and learning music became a divine activity. Parents would leave children as young as five or six in Sri Bhaini Sahib to pursue music.

In a documentary on Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, Sukhvinder Singh Pinky, the celebrated Grammy award winner and tabla player, gratefully recounts the grace of the Guru in his making as a musician. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji had heard Sukhvinder Singh Pinky play the dholak while his brother Sukhdev Singh sang. Pleased with their performance, he invited the young artistes, then seven and nine respectively, to Sri Bhaini Sahib.

When his parents met Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the Satguru told them:

“From now on, we will make the important decisions in their lives.”

To that, the parents readily agreed and replied:

“O Sacha Patsha, the children belong to you.”

That is how the glorious journey in music of Sukhvinder Singh Pinky started with the blessings of the Satguru.

At first he started learning music from Ustad Nihal Singh ji. Later, Patsha ji sent him to the greatest tabla artiste of the time, Pandit Kishan Maharaj of Benares, with whom Pinky studied tabla for eighteen years. Today, Pinky is a legend in the field of music.

Sukhdev Singh, along with Mohan Singh, learnt music from the illustrious Mishra brothers.

At Sri Bhaini Sahib, music classes would start at two o'clock in the morning and the children had to wake up very early. When a child did not turn up at the class, Patsha ji would send someone to find out why the child had not come. After the morning classes the children had to participate in Asa di Vaar, which would be held at four o'clock in the morning. After attending school, the children had to again practise music in the evening from six to eight o'clock. In spite of this gruelling schedule, the children were happy. For the Master knew the secret of making them happy. Every moment they basked in the love of the Satguru who

would not forget to buy badminton racquets or other small gifts for the children when he returned from a trip abroad.

Patsha ji would sit with the children singing the basic notes, Sa Re Ga Ma, for hours together. He would not feel bored or tired coaching these tiny tots. He would listen to them closely, sing with them, correct them if they made mistakes. The patience and love with which he handled the children was remarkable.

Raagi Balwant Singh states:

“If today many Namdhari musicians are performing all over the world and their contribution is acknowledged, it is all due to the efforts, vision and blessings of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji.”

Patsha ji used to tell his brother Maharaj Bir Singh ji:

“We have to teach these children whatever we know so that the knowledge continues, it should not die with us.”

When he found exceptional talent in some child, he took special care to nurture it. Patsha ji would often say:

“Children are like raw milk. You can churn them into anything.”

Some fortunate students were under Patsha ji’s direct guidance. He would teach a bandish and if the student perfected it, he would be delighted and teach a new bandish the following day. Patsha ji loved his students so much that often he made them stay at his residence to practise music. Day and night, music was on his mind.

Patsha ji was a connoisseur and a collector of traditional compositions, which turned him into a true researcher of classical music. He sent the talented students to eminent ustads of different gharaanas so that their rich legacy would be handed down to the next generation.

Raagi Balwant Singh recalls how Patsha ji insisted that he learnt the sitar even though Balwant's heart was in playing the santoor. But when the Satguru wills who can say no? Patsha ji sent him to Ustad Vilayat Khan ji. In retrospect, Balwant Singh says:

“During the course of my lessons in the sitar, Vilayat Khan ji taught me some very rare compositions, which would have been lost to the world if they were not learnt. It was Patsha ji's vision which made me learn those pieces and preserve them for posterity.”

After the demise of Vilayat Khan ji, Patsha ji told Balwant Singh:

“You need not learn the sitar any longer. You can get back to the santoor and vocal music if you desire.”

Patsha ji as an eclectic and innovative musician

Satguru ji's thirst for music was so keen that he could forego sleep and food and immerse himself in the world of music. Once he happened to get hold of a famous singer's music book with rare raags and compositions. He sat up the whole night and went through the notes. He would not let go of the book even in his bathtub. He practised and memorised the compositions while bathing.

After mastering the compositions, Patsha ji wanted to present them in front of the musician who had composed them. But he was disappointed when he learnt that the musician had passed away. He found out that the musician's daughter was living in Bombay. Patsha ji went to Bombay and made her listen to her father's composition. She was in tears when she heard them rendered by Patsha ji's students.

Patsha ji would get hold of some old records of rare raags and teach them to the students. Out of the thirty-one raags in the Gurbani, Patsha ji used to sing even the rare ones with ease. He would teach the complex compositions to his students and ask them to present them the next morning in Asa di Vaar. When the students excelled, his joy knew no bounds.

Once Patsha ji composed a new bandish and wanted to teach it to the sons of Pandit Rajan Mishra ji. He called them to Bangalore and the lessons went on for a couple of days. When Patsha ji learnt or composed a new piece he used to present it in front of other artistes and receive their comments. During one of his trips to England, in 1997, Satguru ji invited the renowned sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar ji and rendered some of his rare compositions. Pandit ji was very happy and appreciated the musical wealth in him.

Patsha ji invited Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma and Pandit Ram Narayan to Namdhari Farms, Bidadi to listen to his new composition.

While appreciating music, language was no barrier to Patsha ji. In Bangalore he heard a Kannada devotional song which he liked so much that he asked Balwant Singh to learn it. When someone gave Patsha ji the English text of a shabad, he wanted it to be sung in the traditional Gurmat style. To Patsha ji, the language of music meant bhav, taal and bhakti.

Patsha ji was an eclectic musician who was enamoured by anything creative and new in the field of music. Once, in Thailand, he heard a person play music on a set of glasses filled with water. The musician was using his fingers to produce melodious notes. Patsha ji liked the instrument so much that he called Balwant Singh, who was in Sri Bhaini Sahib to come to Thailand immediately to learn playing the instrument.

Balwant Singh took the flight from Delhi to Bangkok and met with the musician. He bought a set of glasses from the Thai markets and perfected the art within a couple of days. Patsha ji was very happy. After a few months, Patsha ji and Balwant Singh went to Sarod Ghar in Gwalior to participate in a music meet. There, Balwant Singh demonstrated the instrument he had learnt in Thailand. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and his wife Subhalakshmi, who were listening to the music, wanted to know the name of the instrument. Balwant Singh said:

“I don’t know.”

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan suggested with a laugh:

“Then let’s call it the ‘Namdhari Tarang’.”

Balwant Singh says:

“There was a special quality in the way in which Patsha ji sang devotional songs. He would sing in a slow, clear and steady voice, paying great attention to correct pronunciation, stress and repetition of the words of the hymns. He conveyed the right emotion through these means. There was so much of love and devotion in the singing, it would be difficult to extricate oneself from the magical web he created.”

Patsha ji has composed several musical pieces and Balwant Singh has learnt them all. Balwant Singh was lucky to receive Patsha ji's personal music notebook too. It is interesting to note that there was no special time for composing these bandishes. Patsha ji was very spontaneous and these bandishes sprang from his heart. His best compositions were extempore.

Once, a person called Pal Singh, a hockey coach, came to the diwan in the evening and bowed before Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. Delighted to see him, Satguru ji composed a shabad of Kabir, which goes “Kabir Paal Samuha Sarvar Bhara”. He composed it in the melodious Raag Bhoopali with the word 'Paal'.

When Mata Chand Kaur came to a music baithak, Satguru ji sang, “Tu sabni thaai jithe hau jaai sacha sirjanhar jio” which means “Wherever I go, you also come...” It is a composition on the omnipresence of God. People around were touched by Patsha ji's sense of humour.

On one occasion, Pandit Birju Maharaj ji, the great Kathak exponent, had requested Satguru Jagjit Singh ji for a composition in Dhamar taal. Patsha ji asked Ustad Harbhajan Singh, the sitar player and Sardar Avtar Singh, the tabla player, to compose a piece. When they expressed their inability to do so, Patsha ji composed a shabad based on Guru Gobind Singh ji's Dasam Granth and sang “Aye gayee sab khelat Hori”, in his melodious voice. Later, in a sangeet sammelan in Bombay, Pandit Birju Maharaj danced to it and Patsha ji was very happy.

Patsha ji was so creative that he did not need any special ambience or gadgets to sing or compose music. Music always resided in his heart.

Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma says:

“There was a time when musicians and dancers were patronised by kings and then the gharaanas began. After Independence, the government did not take any interest in promoting these arts. In these circumstances, this avtaar purush, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, appeared as a saviour. In my opinion, his efforts in the 20 century should be written in the pages of history in golden letters.”

Through the efforts of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji a generation of young musicians appeared on the arena of Indian classical music and Gurmat Sangeet. He truly democratized music by throwing open the doors of the music school at Sri Bhaini Sahib to the sons of poor farmers, carpenters and artisans. He would provide education, financial support and parental care to the talented youngsters. Some of the life stories of his students reveal the truth that Patsha ji was indeed their God, the creator.

Patsha ji's contribution to the success of Pandits Rajan Mishra and Sajan Mishra as musicians is well known, yet worth recalling. Pandit Rajan Mishra was a young upcoming musician when he met Patsha ji in 1973 in Delhi. One of the organizers of Satguru Partap Singh Music Sammelan asked Rajan Mishra :

“Will you sing in our Sammelan?”

Rajan Mishra was very happy to get this opportunity and readily agreed to do so. After listening to Rajan Mishra, Patsha ji asked the young man:

“Where are you living and what are you doing for a livelihood?”

Rajan Mishra replied:

“I live next to the Mandir of Sant Kabir in Delhi. I work as an HR officer trainee at Delhi Cloth Mills.”

Patsha ji said:

“Kabir ji's kirpa is on you. How much does the company pay you?”

For a moment, Rajan Mishra did not understand the hidden humour in the statement. Sant Kabir was a musician and weaver and Rajan Mishra was a musician working in a cloth mill.

Rajan Mishra answered:

“Five hundred rupees.”

Patsha ji said:

“If I give you that five hundred rupees, will you give up your job and take up music full time?”

Rajan Mishra resigned from the job the very next day and took up music full time. Patsha ji used to send him six months’ salary at a time and took care of all his needs. Within a year, Sajan Mishra joined Rajan Mishra in Delhi. In 1974, they gave an audition at All India Radio Delhi and got selected as ‘A’ grade artistes. From then on there was no looking back. The Mishra brothers went on to win national and international acclaim.

Rajan Mishra ji says gratefully:

“All our achievements and happiness are due to Satguru ji’s kirpa.”

To Patsha ji, music was a means of reaching God. It is a divine art and a gift from Gods. Patsha ji held musicians in high esteem. A Satguru’s residence is a place of worship and reverence. Both Satguru Partap Singh ji and Patsha ji would not enter the Sri Jiwan Nagar kothi seated astride a horse. They would alight from the horse and proceed. But Pandit Mahadev Prasad ji, their music teacher, was the only person who was allowed this privilege and seated on the horse, he would go past the gate.

During any music programme, even if the performer was a small child, Patsha ji would provide him a seat of equal height as his. This was the respect he showed to the art.

Maulvi Fazal Mohammad, a blind Muslim musician, a maker of musical instruments, who lived in Sri Bhaini Sahib for twenty years, migrated to Pakistan during Partition. A few years later, he wrote a letter to Patsha ji, expressing a deep desire to have his darshan. The Satguru was moved by this request. In 1961, he travelled to Lahore and fulfilled the wish of the musician. The musician was so overwhelmed by the gesture that he embraced Patsha ji and said:

“I can see khuda in you.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji would preside over long hours of music sessions, which were enthralling. Surrounded by a galaxy of singers and instrumentalists, Patsha ji looked truly an emperor. Today, Patsha ji’s students recall how memorable those baithaks were. There are video clippings showing Patsha ji singing his compositions to Ustad Vilayat Khan ji, Rajan and Sajan Mishra ji and the maestros joining Patsha ji with admiration and devotion writ large on their faces.

Patsha ji would invite maestros such as Ustad Vilayat Khan, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Pandit Birju Maharaj, Ustad Zakir Hussain, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma and Pandits Rajan and Sajan Mishra to Sri Bhaini Sahib to train the students. The masters taught rare compositions to the selected students. Many artistes would stay for a number of days at Sri Bhaini Sahib, basking in the love and affection showered on them by Patsha ji, who would tell the cooks at the langar:

“You should provide such tasty Namdhari vegetarian food that Ustad Vilayat Khan ji should not miss non vegetarian food.”

Patsha ji kept on learning and teaching music till the end. He would often hold the tiny fingers of a child and the trained fingers of established musicians to teach them the intricacies of a taal.

Harjinder Singh, the Namdhari sarod player, expresses with a great sense of gratitude:

“We did not then know how blessed we were to study music at the feet of such great artistes. We, the children of poor farmers, would not have been able to go anywhere near such musicians. It was all due to Patsha ji’s generosity.”

Patsha ji did for Hindustani classical music what often music academies and governments fail to do. He worked with musicians to retain the purity of traditional and classical forms of singing. Preservation and restoration of traditional music and musical instruments was undertaken at Sri Bhaini Sahib. He would go to any extent to encourage musicians. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the Sarab Kala Samrath, built houses for musicians, gave them cars, money, and took care of their families.

Once, Pawar Bandhu, two Dhrupad singers came from Indore to Sri Bhaini Sahib to meet Patsha ji. They performed for two and half hours and left for Jullundur. They expressed a desire to listen to Patsha ji who promised to sing the next day.

The following evening, Patsha ji started the concert at six o’clock. After three hours of listening, the Dhrupad singers began to get tired. But Patsha ji would not put an end to the session which went on till eleven o’clock. Patsha ji was presenting bandish after bandish with great flourish and the Dhrupad singers began to wonder whether the concert would end that night at all or would usher in the rays of the morning sun. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji’s love and dedication to music was more than that of the professional singers. To him music transcended the limits of time and space.

At last, the long session of music came to an end and Patsha ji gifted the Dhrupad singers with a gold chain each and made them happy.

Music was an integral part of Patsha ji’s existence. It was his life force, a natural necessity as vital as breath.

When Patsha ji visited Bangkok, Thailand in February 2006, he suffered a stroke and lost the power of speech. He did not speak for four days and the doctors attending on him were worried that he may not regain his speech.

Balwant Singh, the dear disciple of Patsha ji, who had accompanied him on the trip, visited Patsha ji at the Bumrungrad hospital where he was being treated. Balwant Singh started singing one of Patsha ji's favourite bandish, "Kaano gallaan keetiyaan balochiyaan dey naal".

To everybody's relief and surprise, Patsha ji too joined him in a feeble voice. All including the doctors, shed tears of joy at this musical miracle.

Music and naam were buried deep in his subconscious mind. Ravi, the physiotherapist at Satguru Partap Singh Hospitals, Ludhiana, who attended to Patsha ji during his ailments, states that while other patients shout, scream and grumble after a stroke or operation, Patsha ji used to be calm and composed. Only naam and music emanated from his soul.

As a result of Patsha ji's efforts, hundreds of Namdhari Sikh children and youth have been trained in classical music and Gurmat Sangeet in India and abroad. In recognition of his great contribution to the field of classical music, the national Sangeet Natak Akademi conferred the "Tagore Ratan" Fellowship Award on Patsha ji in 2012. The citation stated:

"An accomplished singer and dilruba player Satguru Jagjit Singh ji had worked ceaselessly for the development and propagation of Indian classical music and Gurmat Sangeet. Having succeeded his father as spiritual head of the Namdhari Sikhs in 1959, Satguru Jagjit Singh organized the Satguru Partap Singh Sangeet Sammelan regularly in his memory. A number of talented students received support and encouragement from Satguru Jagjit Singh to learn music from leading musicians. He performed widely at music festivals, and created compositions to various ragas in unconventional taalas."

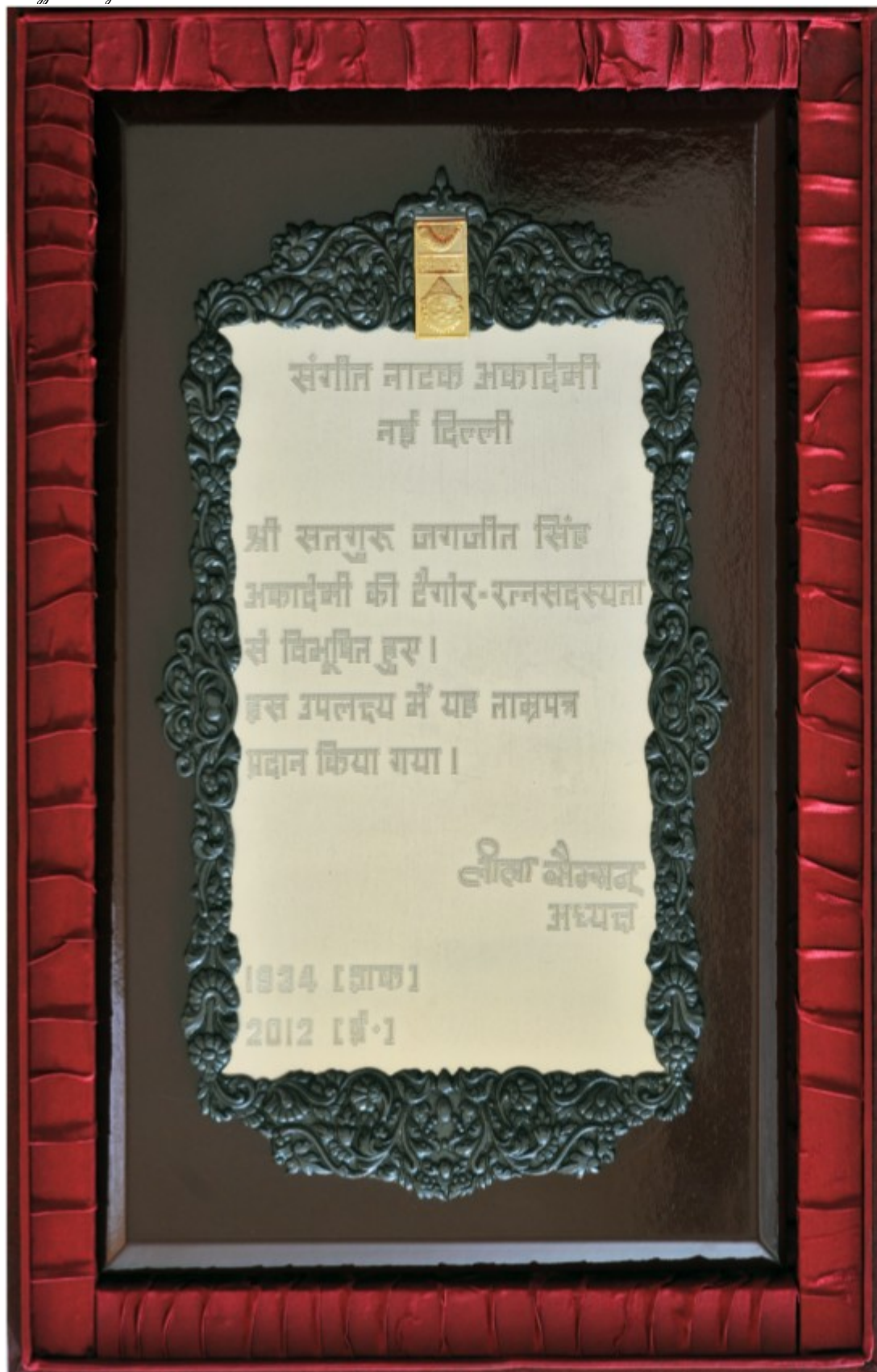
Satguru Jagjit Singh was the recipient of several honours including the Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan Award conferred in 1999.

Ustad Zakir Hussain, the legendary tabla player, sums up Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's contribution to Indian classical and devotional music:

“There are very few gurus in our age who have such an influence on all spheres of life whether it is music, spirituality, life, or on educating people on how to lead an ideal life. Especially in the field of music, the blessings that Satguru ji has given to artistes, has no parallel in this life or this age.”

Today, there are many artistes in the world of music who are jewels cut and polished by the master jeweller called Satguru Jagjit Singh ji.





National Sangeet Natak Akademi conferred the
“Tagore Ratan” Fellowship Award on Satguru Jagjit Singh ji

(9)

ਕਾਪੀ ਰਗ ਵਿਦਾ
ਸੀ ਭੈਣੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ
ਜਿਲਾ
ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ ਤਿ

੧੬ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥ ਰਾਗ ਨੀਲਾਸ ਕਾਸੀਆਨ
ਏਸ ਕੇਸਰ ਸੁਰਨੇ ਜਾਏ ਏਸ ਕੀ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ॥ ਵਕਤ
ਸੁਭਾ ਕੇ ਗਾਇਨ ਕਰਨੀ ॥ ਆਸਾ ਮੇਘ ਰਾਗ ਕੀ ਰਾ
ਗ ਨੀਲਾ ॥ ਆਸਾ ਦੇ ਸੁਰ ॥ ਰੂਹਣਾ ॥ ਅਰ ॥ ਅਵ
ਰੋਹਣਾ ॥ ਸਾ ॥ ਰਾ ॥ ਗਾ ॥ ਮੰ ॥ ਪ ॥ ਧਨਾ ॥

ਸ ॥ ਰ ॥ ਗਾ ॥ ਮੰ ॥ ਪ ॥ ਧ ॥ ਨ ॥ ਸ

੧ ॥ ਸ ਰ ਚੜ੍ਹੀ ॥ ਗ ਚੜ੍ਹੀ ਮ ਉੜ੍ਹੀ ॥ ਪ ਧ ਚੜ੍ਹੀ
ਨ ਚੜ੍ਹੀ ॥ ਆਸਾ ॥ ਵੀ ਸਰਗਮ ॥

ਸਾ ॥ ਰ ਮ ਪ ਧਾ ॥ ਪ ਨ ਧ ਪ ॥ ਮ ਗ ਰ ਸਾ ॥ ਗ ਰ ਸ ਸਾ ॥

੨ ॥ ਰ ਮ ਪ ਧਾ ॥ ਪ ਨ ਧ ਪ ॥ ਮ ਗ ਰ ਸਾ ॥ ਗ ਰ ਸ ਸਾ ॥ ੨ ॥

ਨ ਪ ਨ ਪ ॥ ਰ ॥ ਰ ਸ ਰਾ ॥ ਗਾ ॥ ਗਾ ॥ ਰ ਸਾ ॥ ੨ ਰ ਮ
ਪ ਧਾ ॥ ਪ ਨ ਧ ਪ ॥ ਮ ਗ ਰ ਸਾ ॥ ਗ ਰ ਸ ਸਾ ॥ ੩ ॥

ਸਰਗਮ ॥ ਨ ਪ ਨ ਪ ॥ ਮ ਪ ਧ ਸਾ ॥ ਸ ਸਾ ਸ ਰ ਗਾ ॥

ਸ ਨ ਪ ਪ ॥ ਸ ਸਾ ॥ ਸ ਰ ਸ ਨ ਪ ਪ ਮ ਗ ਰ ਸਾ ॥ ਰ ਮ ॥ ੧ ॥

ਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ॥ ਰਵਿਓਵਾਚੀ ਜੁਝਿ ਰਾਗ ਰਾਗ ਪ੍ਰਾਨਾ ॥ ਰਾਗ
ਸਸ ਰ ਸਰ ਸਪ ਪ ਪ ਧਾ ॥ ਗ ਰ ਸਸ ॥ ਗ ਮ ਪ ਧਾ ॥ ਪ ਧ ਮ
ਪ ਮ ਗ ਰ ਸਾ ॥ ਗ ਮ ਪ ॥ ਗ ਮ ਪ ॥ ਮੰ ॥ ਰ ਗੁਣ ਰ ਮ ਪੁਰਨਾ
ਤੋੜ ਦੀ ਨਾ ਸੁਦਾਇਆ ॥ ਉਤਰ ਬੰਤਰ ਸੇਵਤ ਜਾ ਗਤ
ਜੀਅ ਪੁਨ ਪੁਨ ਮਨ ॥ ਪ ਪ ਧਾ ॥ ਸਸ ॥ ਗ ਰ ਗ ਸ ਨ
ਸਸ ਰ ॥ ਸ ਨ ਪ ਪ ॥ ਪ ਪ ਧਾ ॥ ਪ ਪ ਧਾ ॥ ਗ ਰ ਸਸ ॥ ਗ ਮ ਪ ਧ
ਪ ਧ ਮ ॥ ਪ ਮ ਗ ਰ ਸਾ ॥ ਗ ਮ ਪ ॥ ਗ ਮ ਪ ॥ ੨ ॥

ਵਸ ਵਰ ਸ ਨ ਪ ਆਸ ਬਰ ਤ ਮੀ ਮੇਰੈ ਨ ਕ ਵ ਰ ਸ
ਨਿਹਾਣਾ ॥ ੩ ॥ ੨ ॥

ਏਸ ਨ ਪ ਤ ਸਾ ਰੀ ॥ ਮੀ ॥ ਪਿਧਾ ਰੇ ਨੁ ਰ ਨ ਮੁਰਾ
ਦਾ ਕੀ ॥ ਸਸ ॥ ਨ ਪ ਧ ਪ ॥ ਮ ਮ ਮ ॥ ਪ ਧ ॥ ਪ ਨ ਪ ਪ
ਮ ਧ ॥ ਪ ਪ ਪ ਪ ॥ ਪ ਨ ਪ ਪ ॥ ਮ ਗ ਰ ਸਾ ॥ ਗ ਮ ਪ
ਗ ਮ ਪ ਪ ॥ ਪ ਮ ਪ ॥ ਰੂਪ ਬੰਤਰੇ ਗੁਣਾ ॥ ਏਸ
ਦਾ ਵਿਛਾਰਾ ਕੀ ਵਾਸਾ ॥ ਰੇ ਰੇ ਰੇ ॥ ਸੁਭ ਸੁਰਾਹੀ
ਪੰਜ ਰੇਖਾ ਮਾਝੀ ॥ ਗੁਕਸਾ ॥ ਏਸ ਦੇ ਸਹਿਵਾ
ਮਾਰ ਤੇ ਦਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਬਰ ਰੇ ਗਾ ਬਰੁਠ ਮੇਰੇ ਆਵਾ

ਸਿਧੂਰੀ ਟੋੜੀ ਤਬ ੪

ਟੋੜੀ ਮ: ਪ ਘ ਰੁ ੨ ਦੁਪਦੇ

੧੬ ਸਤਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ:

ਮਾਗਉ ਦਾਨੁ ਤਾਕੁਰਨਾ ॥ ਪੁਰਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਕਛੁ ਮੇਰੈ ਸੀਧੀਨ ਚਾਲੈ ॥ ਮੇਲੈ
ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਮ ॥ ਰਾਗਉ: ਰਾਜ ਮਾਲ ਅਨੇਕ ਭੋਗ ਭੋਜ ਸਗਲ
ਤਰਵਰੀ ॥ ਛਾਮਾ ॥ ਪਾਇ ਪਾਇ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਕਉ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਸਗਲ ਨਿਰਾ
ਕਥ ਕਾਮ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਅਵਰੁ ਜੇ ਚਾਹਉ ॥ ਚੀਜੈ ਸਗਲ ਬਾਤ ਹੈ
ਖਾਮ: ਕਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਰਫੇਟ ਮਾਗਉ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਨ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਬਿਸ੍ਵਾਮ ॥

ਨੀੜ: ੪੬ ੮੦

ਗਾਗ ਕਾਮਾਚ ਗਾਲ ੩ ਰੂਮਰੀ:

ਕੀਵਰੀ ਆਕੂ ਕਚੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਰਸੀਲੀ ॥ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਿੰਨੁ ਸਤਾਵੈ ਪੀਅ
ਬਿਨੁ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਚੁਕਾਵੈ ॥ ਨਿਸਾ ਅੰਧਿਆਰੀ ਕਾਰੀ ਬਿਸਰੀ ਚਾਕੈ
ਮੋਹ ਜੀਭ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ੬ ॥ ਇਤਨੀ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਉਨੀ ਸਿਰ ਕਹੀਓ
ਉਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਸੀਮਾ ਨਿਕਸਿਓ ਹੀ ਜਾਵੈ ॥ ਹਮ ਤੁਧੁ ਤੁਧੁ ਪਾਏ

Pages from the music notebook of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji

5 CHAPTER



The New Dawn

ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਜੋਤਿ ਜਗਮਗੈ ਤੇਜੁ ਭੂਅ ਮੰਡਲਿ ਛਾਯਉ ॥

Pargat jot jagmagai tej bhua mandal chhayao.

His Divine Light shines forth, dazzling and radiant;

His Glorious Grandeur pervades the realms of the world.

Before a new dawn, sometimes, the sky is overcast with dark clouds. So it was with the Namdhari Sangat, which was deeply pained that a number of false cases had been filed against Satguru Partap Singh ji, who had steered the Namdhari community through hard times of political turmoil, freedom struggle and Partition of India. Some Sikhs who wanted to tarnish the image of Satguru Partap Singh ji had filed these civil cases with the intention of summoning the Satguru ji to court. Their evil intention did not succeed.

Satguru ji, who was ready to hand over the mantle of leadership to a worthy successor, addressed the representatives of the sangat at Sri Jiwan Nagar in May, 1959:

“From today onwards, whoever wants to be under the orders of Vadda Kaka, can stay here, others may leave.” (Jas Jivan, Part 6).

When someone asked Satguru Partap Singh ji about the future of the Namdharis, he said:

“Vadda Kaka is capable of taking care of the sangat.”

A couple of days before Satguru Partap Singh ji had to appear in the court, His Holiness merged with the light on 22nd August, 1959.

The following day, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, seated on the Gurgaddi, shone like the bright star. On 10 September, 1959, after the bhog ceremony for Satguru Partap Singh ji, Bhai Wazir Singh, Satguru Partap Singh ji's attendant, presented the turban to Satguru Jagjit Singh ji on behalf of the Namdhari sangat.

The soul of Satguru Partap Singh ji manifested itself in the person of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. A large number of religious and political personalities and the entire Namdhari sangat were witness to this great event. When their eyes shed tears for the departed Guru their hearts were filled with joy as they beheld the rising son.

When Satguru Jagjit Singh ji ascended the throne, His Holiness had many challenges before him. Till 1959, he was an ideal Gursikh, unquestioningly carrying out all the commands of his father. But now, he had to provide leadership to a community, which was looking up to him for guidance.

The first initiative Patsha ji took up was to hold a dialogue with the opponents who had filed false cases against his father, Satguru Partap Singh ji. Patsha ji took them into confidence, made them realize their mistakes and resolved the conflict amicably.

In the 1963 Hola Mohalla congregation at Sant Nagar, the opponents repented their actions and asked Satguru Jagjit Singh ji to forgive them. All the cases against Satguru Partap Singh ji were dropped.

Once the community became united, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji took upon himself the task of realizing the dreams of Satguru Partap Singh ji for the development of Namdhari sangat in all walks of life.

In the early 1960s, like the youth all over the country, Namdhari youngsters too were restless, caught in the conflict between tradition and modernity. They wanted to tread the path of economic progress. During the freedom struggle, the Namdharis had boycotted colonial education as per the hukumnama of Satguru Ram Singh ji. In free India, the government and even private sector jobs were linked to university education and degrees.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was concerned that the Namdhari youth should not be left behind in this race for progress and hence directed both men and women to get educated in modern schools and colleges.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji ascending the Gurgaddi, Sept. 1959

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji knew that he had to harness the power of the Namdhari youth and build a community which was spiritually, economically and culturally strong. As a first step towards this, Patsha ji organised several Namdhari Vidyak Jatha youth conferences.

The first Namdhari Vidyak Jatha was convened on 1 st September, 1962 at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji gave a call to the graduates within the community. In the 1960s, there was only a handful of graduates in the Namdhari community. Harvinder Singh Hanspal, ex Member of Parliament and Inder Singh Namdhari were among them.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji wanted the Namdhari youth to excel in studies but at the same time reminded them to be rooted in their tradition and culture. The young men and women were not confident enough to claim their Namdhari heritage and were self-conscious about wearing the white kurta, pyjama and the round turban to schools and colleges. Those were the heady days of Westernization, hippie culture and pop music. Everything Western was considered acceptable and fashionable.

Patsha ji spoke to the Namdhari youth on the sacrifices made by their ancestors and the need to take pride in one's history and culture. He wanted them to become doctors, engineers and judges. But first and foremost they had to be good Sikhs and proclaim to the world the greatness of the Namdhari religion and tradition.

Harbhajan Singh, Suba of Ludhiana and a wealthy businessman, recalls the charm of those days. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji would sit with the youth under the banyan tree in Sri Bhaini Sahib and talk with each one of them. Those were exclusive sessions and no elders would be allowed to participate in those discussions.

Patsha ji established a close rapport with the youth and would listen patiently to their hopes and aspirations. He would ask them about their families and respond to any question. He would explain the significance of wearing white clothes which is symbolic of purity and how it brings in uniformity, wiping away the difference of money, caste and status. It also promotes simplicity and avoids extravagant expense on clothes and fashion. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji said the money thus saved

could be used to educate children or be invested in business or given away in charity.

During one such session with Patsha ji, Suba Harbhajan Singh's elder brother, S. Jagmohan Singh, who was in his late teens, felt uncomfortable because of his modest upbringing. His father had embraced Namdhari Sikhism after listening to a discourse of Pandit Gopal Singh ji. The youngster told Satguru Jagjit Singh ji:

“Patsha ji, I have no illustrious family or Kuka ancestors to boast of. We are poor.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji called him near and pointing to all other youth gathered there, said:

“From today this is your family, you are no longer alone.”

It is this kind of gesture which brought an immediate bonding between the disciple and the Guru. Patsha ji showered unconditional love and affection on all and the youth were drawn to him. He was virtually their father and Guru and they were more attached to Patsha ji than to their own parents.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji treated the youth in such a friendly manner that often they forgot that he was their Guru and considered him a friend. Sadhu Singh Kisan, son of Sant Taran Singh Vahimi (author of *Jas Jivan*) recalls:

“One day when we were working together in Sri Jiwan Nagar I felt so close to Patsha ji, I told him, 'I do not consider you my Guru, you are my friend.'”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji responded with a smile and continued working.

Sadhu Singh Kisan reported this matter to his father. The father was aghast. He read out relevant sections from the *Guru Granth Sahib*, which highlighted the divinity of the Guru, and admonished his son for being playful and disrespectful. He instructed his son to seek the pardon of the Satguru.

Sadhu Singh Kisan rushed to Sri Bhaini Sahib, fell at the feet of Patsha ji and sought forgiveness. Again with an enigmatic smile, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji welcomed and accepted him. Patsha ji was neither annoyed when he was not considered a Guru nor was he elated when Kisan ji sought his pardon.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji called for a meeting of Namdhari youth in 1964 at Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, which was attended by few hundred youths. During this meet, Patsha ji interacted with them closely and expressed his desire to mould them into a force for social uplift of their community. He promised to give them exclusive time during the following youth meet. This information was published in Satjug magazine and it had a tremendous impact.

In 1965, a meet of all local vidyak jathas was held in Sri Bhaini Sahib to form the organization called Sarab Hind Namdhari Vidyak Jatha. Namdhari youth, especially boys from all over India, as far as Delhi, Jammu and Himachal Pradesh, gathered in large numbers at this meet.

Jagdish Singh Waryam ji recalls his experience. When Satguru Jagjit Singh ji asked him to attend the first Vidyak Sammelan of 1965 at Sri Bhaini Sahib, Waryam ji was a young man. He told Satguru Jagjit Singh ji:

“Patsha ji, please excuse me. I may not be able to come to this sammelan as I have opened a shop very recently.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji asked him:

“If you fall sick, won’t you shut the shop for a day or two?”

With folded palms, Waryam ji pleaded:

“Patsha ji, please bless me with good health. I will be there.”

In those days, reaching Sri Bhaini Sahib was not easy. Waryam ji and his friends had to walk quite a distance through fields and muddy tracks to reach Sri Bhaini Sahib. The evening before the sammelan, tired and hungry, they reached the

langar, when suddenly there was a commotion. People who were seated at langar were excited. They got up, saying:

“Patsha ji is coming!”

Waryam ji was pleasantly surprised to see the smiling figure of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji stand in front of him.

The affectionate Satguru ji said:

“I have come to see if you have come.”

In 1965, the youth organization was named All India Namdhari Vidyak Jatha. Master Nihal Singh ji was made the president of the jatha. From then on, the annual youth sammelans were a regular feature. The main objective of this youth organization is the creation of a good human being, says Gurmukh Singh, the present coordinator of the Vishwa Namdhari Vidyak Jatha.

The youth sammelans, conducted by the Namdhari Vidyak Jatha, provided an opportunity for youngsters from different backgrounds to meet on a common platform. Lifelong friendships were forged here. Youngsters exchanged their dreams and aspirations in the presence of the Satguru who was always there to guide them. It was this forum and personal contact with the Satguru which led to the identification and promotion of talent, especially in the fields of classical music and literature. Many artistes made their debut in the divine presence of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji.

Usually the youth sammelans lasted a week and Patsha ji would stay through the entire sammelan with the youngsters and devote a lot of time to educate them. He would sit amidst them and discuss their hopes and aspirations as individuals and as a community. All the participants lived on the same campus, ate together and washed their clothes together.

During these meets, Patsha ji would clean vessels, draw water and sweep the floors of Sri Bhaini Sahib to drive home the truth that service is the greatest

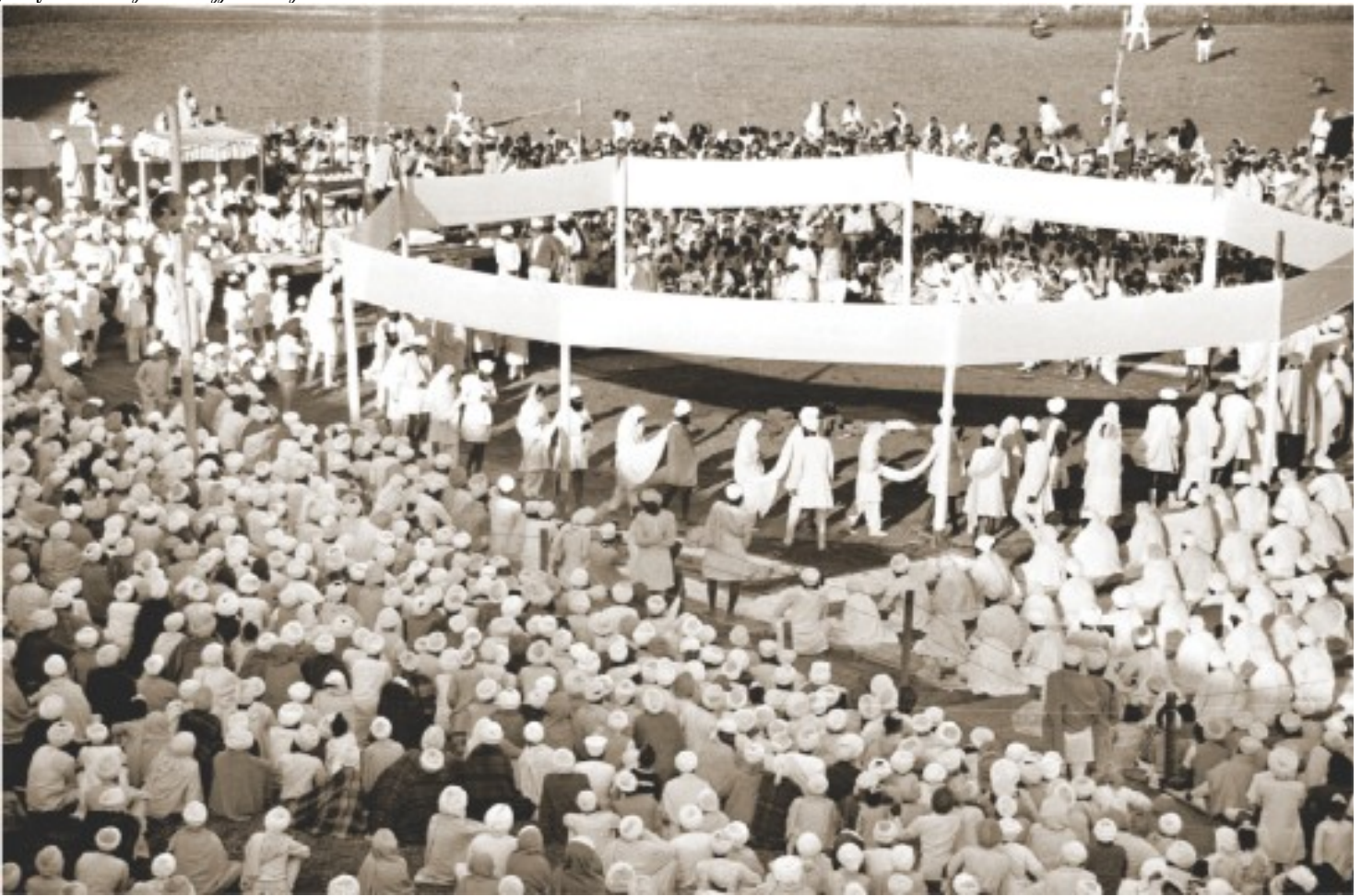
quality the youth have to cultivate. He would himself serve them with parsad at the langar.

Organisers invited scholars such as Inder Singh Chakravarty, Dr. Amar Bharti, Pandit Gopal Singh and Pritam Singh Kavi to talk to the youth on Namdhari history, tradition and the importance of retaining their unique spiritual identity. From time to time, learned people were called to educate the youth about vegetarianism, nature cure, peace and cow protection.

Debates and elocution competitions on topics such as Namdhari history, maryada and traditions, were held along with music and sports competitions. During the first few sammelans all the participants were photographed. This was a matter of great excitement among the youth.

During the youth sammelans, the talent of several orators came to light. Many of them, such as H. S. Hanspal, on the advice of Satguru ji, entered politics. Hanspal ji was the President of Namdhari Youth Wing.

Year by year, the youth meets became very popular and youngsters would wait for vacations so that they could be with the Satguru ji at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Parents would also look forward to these sammelans because instead of sending their children to their grandparents, they could send them to Patsha ji. Nothing could be more beneficial than growing up in the presence of a Satguru, who played the role of parent to them so well that the youth were saved from the evils of alcoholism, drugs and smoking. They realized the truth that devotion to the Satguru protects one from all vices.



Anand Karaz - Namdhari mass weddings

Patsha ji impressed on the youth to adopt a simple way of life. He told them to refuse dowry and extravagance during weddings. When some youth said that their parents expected dowry, Patsha ji assured them that he would handle the parents. He sought a written pledge from the youth that they would opt for a marriage without dowry and ostentation. When the youth began to take pride in the Anand Karaz, the community began to prosper. The money saved from wasteful expenditure was invested in business, farming and education.

The activities of the Vidyak Jatha expanded to cover the entire country. The jatha established its branches in many towns and cities all over India and each branch had its own President, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee. Through these jathas, the Namdhari youth were inspired to serve the community during natural calamities such as floods and earthquakes. They were told to tend to the ill and the infirm. During annual melas at Sri Bhaini Sahib and other places, the youth from all the centres took turns to perform seva in the langar, old age home and goshala. Thus the value of selfless seva was inculcated in them at a young age.

When the activities for the Namdhari youth were taken up at the international level, Vishav Namdhari Vidyak Jatha came into existence. During Patsha ji's time, 48 annual youth sammelans were held. The Vidyak Jatha today has 60 branches in cities and villages across India. Satguru Uday Singh ji, the present spiritual head of the Namdharis, inaugurated an event in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh in June 2015 to mark the fiftieth year of the Namdhari Vidyak Sammelan. It was a four-day event and over 8,000 youth participated in it to prove that the organization started by Satguru Jagjit Singh ji is growing stronger day by day. In the 2016 Sammelan, held from 23 to 27 June at Sri Bhaini Sahib in the divine presence of Satguru Uday Singh ji, Namdhari youth from all over India attended. This is an indication of the commitment of Namdhari youth to walk the way shown by the Satguru.

Empowering Women

How many Indians know the names of Mai Ind Kaur and Mai Khem Kaur, two Namdhari women patriots, who fearlessly marched down to Malerkotla in 1872 along with Hira Singh and other Kukas, to lay down their lives for protection of cows and freedom of the motherland?

History might have marginalized these brave mothers but can we forget that it is such peasant women who gave birth to great spiritual masters such as Satguru Ram Singh ji and Satguru Partap Singh ji? They are the symbols of courage and sacrifice. Their contribution to the preservation and propagation of Namdhari religion has to be gratefully acknowledged.

Over hundred and fifty years ago, on 1st June, 1863, Satguru Ram Singh ji baptized women for the first time into the Namdhari Khalsa, by administering Amrit. Twenty-five Namdhari women, including Satguru Ram Singh ji's mother, Mata Sada Kaur, were among them. This step empowered the Namdhari women and gave them equal rights on par with men for spiritual advancement. The empowered women formed a formidable force and joined hands with the Kuka men during the freedom struggle.

To elevate the social status of women, Satguru Ram Singh ji stopped child marriages and promoted widow remarriages. He banned evil practices such as female foeticide and the killing of the girl child, which were prevalent in Punjab

then. These measures empowered the women and paved the way for their participation in the progress of the community.

Satguru Ram Singh ji had said that if a woman is taught the history of the community, she would educate the children, who would grow up with pride in the community's past and culture. A lot of importance was given to educate girls who would be future mothers. Study of the Guru Granth Sahib was a compulsory part of their upbringing.

Satguru Ram Singh ji believed:

“Children will grow up into what the mother is. Everything, whether the child will be a good or bad individual, depends on the mother.”

Satguru Partap Singh ji continued the tradition of empowering women. On the request of his wife, Mata Bhupinder Kaur, His Holiness allowed Namdhari women to observe the month-long Jap Paryog.

During Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's time, an increasing number of Namdhari girls took to modern education and started moving out of homes. It became necessary to equip them with the right set of values which would root them to the Namdhari spiritual tradition. Keeping this in mind, Patsha ji founded the Istree Vidyak Jatha in 1981 encouraging women to participate in the activities of the panth.

Suba Mohinder Kaur, Hoshiarpur was the first President of the Istree Jatha. Bibi Sukhjit Kaur, the present President of Vishav Namdhari Istree Jatha, was one of the early graduates of the community.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with members of the Namdhari Istree Vidyak Jatha

One of the important tasks of the Istree Jatha was to teach mothers how to bring up the children the right way so that they would grow up to be good Sikhs. The mothers were asked to follow the maryada strictly so that children would adopt it. In Namdhari tradition, it is the privilege of the mother or a senior woman relative, to give the naam to the newborn. Mothers have to perform naam simran on behalf of the children till they are old enough to perform it on their own.

Amarjit Kaur, the Treasurer of the Vishav Namdhari Istree Jatha, says:

“Every year, during summer vacation, children would be called to Sri Bhaini Sahib so that they could be taught the values of the Namdhari community through several activities.”

The aim of the camp was to educate children about the Namdhari way of life. It taught them how to take bath, why to avoid spicy food and how to control anger. They were taught the significance of drinking water from natural sources and why they should avoid food from outside the home. The Istree Jatha holds cooking classes on preparing Namdhari delicacies to make it appealing to the youngsters.

Women and children are taught stitching, so that they can make their own clothes in accordance with Namdhari norms. They also learn the art of making the woollen Namdhari rosary.

The women's jatha encouraged girls to pursue higher studies even after marriage. As a result of the initiative taken by Patsha ji, girls from the Namdhari community are successful professionals. Today, there are pilots, researchers, engineers, doctors and teachers among them. They are adept at balancing home and career. They participate in jap paryogs and attach a lot of importance to naam simran and study of the Gurbani. It is due to Patsha ji's initiative that the girl children and women take part in activities such as Asa di Vaar and public music performances.

Patsha ji took keen interest in the functioning of the women's jatha. He tested the jatha several times to see how well it worked. Once, he appeared at a function organized by the women's jatha fifteen minutes ahead of the scheduled time. The women leaders knew the importance of being ready ahead of time and meeting

deadlines. So they were able to present the programme well. Patsha ji was pleased with their efficiency. He said:

“If you are punctual, you will succeed in life.”

The inauguration of the annual women’s Vidyak Sammelan in 1996-97 was scheduled for eight o’clock in the morning. The previous evening, Patsha ji visited the venue and asked the women organisers:

“Why don’t we have the inauguration at three am?”

The women agreed and worked the whole night and presented the programme at three o’clock in the morning, advancing it by five hours. Patsha ji appreciated their enthusiasm and enterprise. When the other guests arrived the following morning for the inauguration, the events were already underway.

On another occasion, the quiz master in a quiz competition at the Istree Jatha asked the contestants:

“What are the names of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji’s grandchildren?”



Namdhari women artistes

Patsha ji, who happened to hear it, said:

“All are my grandchildren.”

Patsha ji drove home the truth that to a Satguru no one is special and all are equally related to him.

During the time of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, thirty-one sammelans of Istree Vidyak Jathas were held.

In spite of opposition from traditionalists, Patsha ji encouraged girls to learn music and participate in Asa di Vaar, kirtans and other religious platforms.

Many a time, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji played matchmaker and the youth were informed of their wedding just the previous day. Often Patsha ji kept the identity of the person he or she would marry a secret and a surprise. Even the parents were informed about the wedding of their children only a couple of hours before the ceremony. He arranged many inter-caste marriages and Anand Karaz between the rich and the poor but no one questioned his decision and accepted it as a blessing. They trusted the benevolence of the Satguru, who could only do good to them. Like fairy tale weddings, all such marriages are successful and happy.

During these simple weddings which are held in gurdwaras during Asa di Vaar, only the sangat is present. Sometimes, even relatives do not attend due to the short notice. The couple, dressed in simple white clothes, goes around the sacred fire, bows down to the Satguru and the Guru Granth Sahib and enters matrimony.

Today, the Vidyak Jatha created by Patsha ji has a national and international presence. If a Namdhari goes outside his city, town or country to another place, he can still follow the maryada as the local Namdharis offer the spiritual ambience needed to keep the maryada. He can enjoy his vegetarian meal and perform naam simran.

The Vidyak Jathas have brought in a feeling of oneness among Namdharis. The bonding created by the Jathas is very strong because it is the Satguru ji who has bound the heart of one Namdhari with another and that binding is superior to biological relationships. It is a family created by the Satguru the real Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - the universal family.



6 CHAPTER



On the Path of Progress

ਮਾਤਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਪੁਤੁ ਖਾਇ ॥

Mata parit kare put khae.

The mother loves to see her son eat.

ਮੀਨੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਭਈ ਜਲਿ ਨਾਇ ॥

Mine parit bhai jal nae.

The fish loves to bathe in the water.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਮੁਖਿ ਪਾਇ ॥

Satgur parit gursikh mukh pae.

The True Guru loves to place food in the mouth of His Gursikh.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the visionary, dreamt of a strong Namdhari sangat whose presence could be felt nationally and internationally. After harnessing the Namdhari youth power, Patsha ji turned his attention towards the economic, social and cultural progress of the Namdhari Sikhs. He often told the sangat:

“I don’t want any Namdhari Sikh to be poor.”

It was Satguru ji's wish that peace and prosperity should dwell in every Namdhari household. With this vision, he started working towards building an ideal community. Patsha ji said:

“Work hard and constantly chant the naam, share your wealth with the less fortunate ones.”

H. S. Hanspal, former Member of Parliament and President, Namdhari Darbar, recalls how Patsha ji and a few disciples were sitting on the terrace of Hanspal ji's house in Delhi and Patsha ji expressed a wish:

“I want all Namdharis residing in Delhi to have such bungalows.”

This was in 1966 when many of the Namdhari Sikhs in Delhi were struggling to make both ends meet. Most of them had been uprooted from West Punjab during the Partition of India and many were small traders and businessmen eking out an existence in the nation's capital.

Patsha ji's wish was indeed a blessing. After ten years, this dream became a reality and most of the Namdhari Sikhs settled down comfortably in Delhi in their businesses and homes.

Patsha ji turned his attention towards the economic growth of the rural Namdhari population. His Holiness distributed land to the landless farmers and helped them to settle in life with dignity. Initially, he promoted community farming so that the resources could be pooled in and farmers could face adversities together.

Patsha ji had deep knowledge of agriculture and horticulture. He was a very progressive thinker who wanted the farmers to benefit from technological advancements. He was the first to introduce the combine harvester in the farms of Sri Jiwan Nagar, Haryana and other places.

When the farmers resisted the use of combine harvesters because they feared it might affect the production of cattle feed, Patsha ji proved them wrong. He reassured them and illustrated by example that mechanization of farming would

increase efficiency. He arranged for the harvesting of the crops of many farmers free of cost to show the advantage of using the machine. Today, almost all farmers in Punjab use combine harvesters.

Patsha ji was a leader in the field of organic farming too. He encouraged the farmers to rear breeds of native cattle and use the organic manure and organic pesticides.

Patsha ji advised the farmers to introduce new varieties of crops so that the risk of incurring huge losses due to the vagaries of the market would be reduced. Patsha ji challenged the scientists of the Horticulture Department who were of the view that grapes and citrus fruits could not be grown profitably in Hisar district of Haryana. At his farm in Sri Jiwan Nagar, Patsha ji successfully cultivated grapes, oranges, kinnows, mandarins and introduced these fruits to other farms of this area. Today, these are the important crops in the region.



Satguru ji at Namdhari Farms, Bidadi

Namdhari Farms

Namdhari Farms at Bidadi, near Bangalore, stands testimony to Patsha ji's vision of combining professionalism, technology and research in the fields of agriculture and horticulture. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji visited Bangalore for the first time in 1968 when there were just two Namdhari families residing there. Patsha ji liked the slow, sleepy city and intuitively knew that the place was ideally suited for

agriculture. A couple of years later, he sent his younger brother, Maharaj Bir Singh ji, to Bangalore to buy some land for cultivation. Maharaj Bir Singh ji inspected a few sites and most of them measured twenty to thirty acres and among them was a site of two hundred acres in Urakahalli, near Bidadi, which is 35 kilometres from Bangalore. Patsha ji told Maharaj Bir Singh ji:

“Buy the biggest one.”

Maharaj Bir Singh ji asked:

“Patsha ji, how do we arrange for the money?”

Patsha ji assured him:

“Don’t worry. It will be done.”

The two hundred-acre land was bought from one Mr. Iyengar for a sum of Rupees eight lakhs in 1974.

The land was dry and parched and yielded very little. Year after year, Maharaj Bir Singh ji had to reap failures. Disappointed, he sought Patsha ji’s permission to sell the land and an advance of Rupees one lakh was taken from a prospective buyer, a Parsi gentleman named Nazeer. But the transaction could not be completed as one of the preconditions for sale was conversion of the agricultural land for industrial use, which could not be done. The sale deal was cancelled and the land remained with the Namdharis, for it was destined to become a success story later.

In 1982, Patsha ji asked Thakur Uday Singh ji, the present Satguru, to relocate to Bidadi to take care of Namdhari Farms. Patsha ji knew that he was sending the right person to develop Namdhari Farms, Bangalore. Thakur Uday Singh ji was young, energetic and had also gained adequate experience of farming and agriculture at Gola Gokarnath, Uttar Pradesh.

Satguru Uday Singh ji recalls that the first five to six years at Namdhari Farms were fraught with difficulties. There was very little money and lack of rations

added to the problems. Life was a challenge with no proper roads, irregular supply of electricity and poor telephone facilities.

They had to often wait for wheat from Punjab to run the common kitchen. They even had to borrow money from pawn brokers in Bidadi to run the farm. They went through the grind but the only consolation was that Patsha ji used to visit them at least twice a year to see if everything was fine. The financial situation was so bad that once the only vehicle that was with the farm was taken away by the tehsildar of Ramanagara as land tax had not been paid.

Yet, Satguru Uday Singh ji says:

“We enjoyed it all, as there was always the word of hope from Patsha ji who said, ‘We will prosper one day.’ Indeed, he could read the future. Further, we were young and could face the hardships of life with cheer.”

During those days, Patsha ji persuaded Namdhari families from Punjab and Haryana to go to Namdhari Farms, Bidadi. People would be very reluctant to relocate as they called that farm kaala paani. Shifting there was considered a punishment transfer.

Then, with a smile, Patsha ji would tell them:

“A day will come in the future when you will want to go there and I won’t send you.”

This statement is a reality today.

Bibi Gursharan ji, wife of Satguru Uday Singh ji, recalls how in 1984, the place was just a stretch of dry land. Patsha ji would visit the newly wed Thakur Uday Singh ji. Satguru ji was affectionate towards Gursharan, the young bride, who was not only new to Urakahalli, (which means ‘the village of snakes’) but also to India as she was born and brought up in Nairobi, Kenya. During one of the visits, Patsha ji noticed that the roof of the old house in which they were residing was leaking. He told Bibi Gursharan ji gently:

“Bibi, you have to take responsibility for such things, get it repaired.”

The early years were full of challenges and Namdhari Farms was not built in a day. It is a story of grit and the blessings of the visionary Guru, who knew that one day the farm would flourish to gain national and international acclaim. It is remarkable that within a couple of years, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji’s prediction came true.

In the initial years of establishing Namdhari Farms, Patsha ji used to visit Lalbagh and the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), Hebbal, Bangalore, to consult experts on crops which could be grown successfully in Namdhari Farms. Patsha ji was always a keen learner. He would discuss with scientists such as Dr. G. S. Randhawa and Dr. K. L. Chaddha, former directors of IIHR, Bangalore, and Dr. Dutta, vegetable scientist, about innovations in the field of horticulture and agriculture. The first crop cultivated in Namdhari Farms was sugarcane.

Thakur Uday Singh ji readily implemented the innovative ideas suggested by Patsha ji and the scientists.

In the 1980s, Namdhari Farms started cultivating seedless grapes on the advice of B. Gopal, horticulturist, Lalbagh, Bangalore. It was a great success and Satguru Jagjit Singh ji wished to share this experience with the farmers from Punjab and Haryana.

Satguru Uday Singh ji reflects upon the incident:

“Satguru Jagjit Singh ji brought farmers from Punjab and Haryana to Uragehalli, Bidadi, to show them how they had grown the seedless grapes in Namdhari Farms.

The farmers were happy to see the vines laden with large bunches of grapes. They praised Satguru ji for accomplishing a wonderful miracle on the barren land.

Satguru ji quoted from Bhagat Kabir:

ਕਬੀਰ ਨਾ ਹਮ ਕੀਆ ਨ ਕਰਹਿਗੇ ਨਾ ਕਰਿ ਸਕੈ ਸਰੀਰੁ ॥

Kabir na ham kia na karhige na kar sakai sarir

Kabeer, I have not done anything; I shall not do anything; my body cannot do anything.

ਕਿਆ ਜਾਨਉ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਆ ਭਇਓ ਕਬੀਰੁ ਕਬੀਰੁ ॥

Kia jano kich har kia baio Kabir Kabir

I do not know what the Lord has done, but they praise Kabeer.

Satguru ji did not claim any credit for himself. He attributed all the success to God Almighty.

Then Satguru ji himself distributed the fruits to the farmers and asked them:

“Are you happy to have seen the farm and eaten the sweet grapes?”

Everyone answered:

“We are very happy.”

Satguru ji quoted from the Gurbani:

ਦੇਹੁ ਸਜਣ ਅਸੀਸੜੀਆ ਜਿਉ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿਉ ਮੇਲੁ ॥

Dhaehu Sajan Aseesarreeaa Jio Hovai Saahib Sio Mael

My friends, give me your blessings, that I may merge with my Lord and Master.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji told the farmers :

“If all of you are happy, do me a favour. Bless me that I have a meeting with the Almighty God.”

This episode illustrates Patsha ji’s humility and shows that his mind always dwelt on spiritual matters and divinity.

Mango, the king among fruits, attracted Patsha ji, the king among men. Under Patsha ji’s guidance, varieties of mangoes from all over India were planted on the farms. When Patsha ji visited Thailand and other countries, he collected the saplings from there and the exotic mangoes were grown in Namdhari Farms.

During the mango season, Patsha ji would definitely be in Bangalore. He would make sure that his childhood friends and devotees from Punjab, Bangkok or London would join him. He loved to harvest the ripe mangoes, cut them himself and feed his near and dear ones. Satguru Uday Singh ji fondly remembers:

“Patsha ji had a unique way of cherishing and sharing the good things of life with others.”

It was in 1985 that Namdhari Farms entered the hybrid seed production sector in a small way. Patsha ji supported and encouraged it as he was always forward-looking. The phenomenal growth of Namdhari Farms in hybrid seed production can be attributed to the untiring efforts of Satguru Uday Singh ji.

Initially, the Hollar Seeds company and the Campbell Soup Company, USA, placed a trial order for hybrid seeds for a few thousand dollars. Under the expert guidance of Dr. O. P. Dutta, the first order was completed successfully. This led to bigger orders and within seven years of hard work, Namdhari Seeds Pvt. Ltd. reached great heights in contract production of vegetable and flower seeds. In 1992, the company entered the Indian market. Since then, it has been growing steadily from strength to strength.

Today, Namdhari Farms produces seeds on a commercial scale in open fields as well as in greenhouses. It has a nation-wide network for seed production that produces different crops ideally suited to specific climatic conditions.

Simultaneously, the company also started research and development work with professionals to develop hybrids in major vegetable crops. The company has a global presence and exports seeds to countries all over the world.

The Company has trained and nurtured more than 5,000 farmers, creating opportunities in rural entrepreneurship across the country. Namdhari Group of Companies have created job opportunities for more than 10,000 people.

It is a matter of great pride that Namdhari Seeds is a truly Indian company grown global with indigenous talent.

Recognition started pouring in for Namdhari Seeds. It received the Best Exporter Award from Government of Karnataka and Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) 1996-2000.

Thakur Uday Singh ji was unanimously elected the President of the Asian Pacific Seed Association (APSA) at Manila, Philippines, in 1999-2000. He was on the Board of Directors of International Seed Federation 2006-2008. He was also President of Seed Association of India 2007-2008. Thakur Uday Singh ji was hailed as the rising star of the international seed industry.

Namdhari Seeds and Namdhari Fresh have become a household name. The brand name is synonymous with quality. The retail stores cater to the customers who look for fresh vegetables and fruits. The salad bar is an attractive new feature introduced by Bibi Gursharan ji in line with the Namdhari ideology of vegetarianism.

During the phase when Namdhari Farms was growing commercially and going global, Patsha ji reminded Thakur Uday Singh ji that fruit cultivation should not be neglected. Horticulture was very dear to Patsha ji's heart and he asked Thakur Uday Singh ji:

“Kaka, why have you stopped growing fruits in the farm?”

This shows that to Patsha ji in any transaction or work, money was not the primary objective. The work should yield happiness and be wholesome. The balance sheet of an enterprise did not interest Patsha ji much. How beneficial is the work to society mattered most to him. Needless to say, Namdhari Farms resumed fruit cultivation in earnest.

Today, in Bidadi, over a hundred Namdhari families live and work on the farm. They follow Namdhari religious norms and culture and live in amity with the local Kannada population. Working at Namdhari Farms is much sought after and it is a privileged assignment. It is interesting to see the Namdhari community and culture grow on Kannada soil. It is a mini Sri Bhaini Sahib with the morning Asa di Vaar and evening prayers.

The farm has a goshala and its own dairy. It is a self-contained community. The members receive the benefit of vegetables, fruits and milk grown on the farm.

The community observes the Namdhari maryada. Young children go to good schools nearby and the youth study in city colleges. The children receive coaching in tennis, hockey and other games. It is fascinating to see the Namdharis, especially children residing in the farm, speak both Punjabi and Kannada fluently.

A seed sown in the village of Urakahalli, Bangalore, by Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, has grown into a huge tree with branches all over India and abroad promoting the cultivation of quality vegetables, fruits and flowers - indeed, a silent peaceful revolution in the field of agriculture and horticulture.



At Namdhari Farms, Bidadi





A Hospital with a Heart - Satguru Partap Singh Hospitals, Ludhiana

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the mender of the mind, knew the importance of healing the human body also. Whenever people with health issues approached him for help, Patsha ji would send them to hospitals with the instruction that they be given the best treatment. To him, health care was seva to the suffering, a divine intervention to make the body whole. He was the Vaidyo Narayano Harihi in the lives of thousands who came seeking his help and grace.

Patsha ji had a deep desire to build a quality hospital which would serve the people of Punjab and other Northern states. Till that became a reality he used to regularly send patients to doctors known to him.

Dr. G. L. Avasthi, Patsha ji's personal physician, recalls his generosity and concern for others. In 1980s, when Dr. Avasthi was the Professor of Medicine in Dayanand Medical College, Ludhiana, Patsha ji would send patients along with his aide, Darshan Singh, to Dr. Avasthi. The physician would treat them and, if need arose, he would refer them to other specialists. Patsha ji would insist that it was Dr. Avasthi's duty to ensure that they were provided the best treatment.

Over the years, the number of patients from Patsha ji increased significantly and the bill for their treatment mounted up to Rupees ten lakhs per month. This gave impetus to the idea of building a quality hospital which would provide medical care to the poor and the needy.

Once, Patsha ji told Dr. Avasthi:

“Build a great hospital where all patients can be treated, where everyone can get quality treatment irrespective of their status.”

There is an interesting story behind the founding of Satguru Partap Singh Apollo Hospitals, Ludhiana. Patsha ji happened to meet Dr. Prathap Chandra Reddy, the eminent physician and founder of the chain of Apollo Hospitals. They were travelling together in the same plane and someone introduced Dr. Reddy to Patsha ji. Patsha ji casually asked him:

“Doctor Sahib, will you help us in putting up an Apollo in Punjab?”

Who would ever refuse a request from an earnest heart and a noble soul like Patsha ji?

Soon negotiations started with Dr. Reddy for the franchise. The contract and plan to build Satguru Partap Singh Apollo Hospitals at Ludhiana was finalized. Surinder Singh Namdhari played a major role in procuring the land for the hospital and approached the Supreme Court too as part of the legal battle for it. T. L. Arora, an NRI devotee, was actively involved in the initial stages of setting up the hospital.

SPS Hospitals is the only private hospital which has had the privilege of being inaugurated by Dr. Manmohan Singh, the then Prime Minister of India. He declared the hospital open to public on 23rd September, 2005.

It is interesting to note how a hospital built by the saint-like Patsha ji is different from hospitals which are today becoming commercial ventures.

Jugdiep Singh, Managing Director of Satguru Partap Singh Hospitals, Ludhiana, recalls how Patsha ji gave him two clear-cut instructions. Firstly, the hospital should have service as its motto, it had to be an ethical organization; secondly, the hospital would be a world class one. It would not be a mere building, shining but soulless. It would have a heart and serve the sick and suffering with compassion and care. Patsha ji believed that the hospital should have empathy for people who come for treatment. He wanted every person to get better and return home to his family. He always believed in Sarbat da bhala - the good of all.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was passionate about quality. He did not want the hospital to smell like a hospital. It would spread the fragrance of love and care.

Technological upgradation was very dear to Patsha ji's heart. He insisted that Jugdiep Singh ji visit Bumrungrad Hospital at Bangkok, Thailand and keep it as a benchmark for the SPS Hospitals. Years later, when Jugdiep Singh ji asked Patsha

ji if Satguru Partap Singh Hospitals had lived up to his expectations, Patsha ji smiled and nodded in affirmation.

Patsha ji used to visit the hospital and ask the doctors about the welfare of the patients. He was particularly concerned about cancer patients and wished that the best treatment be given to them with care. He would give paper cuttings of recent research on cancer and other ailments and advise the doctors to procure the very best equipment, latest technology and medicines to provide effective treatment. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's concern was not confined to Namdhari patients alone. He instructed that no patient should be deprived of quality treatment for want of money.

During the initial stages, the hospital had to clear several hurdles and Patsha ji's guidance and grace helped the doctors and the management to steer clear of these.

One had to work with faith and conviction and Patsha ji would see that the person succeeds. Patsha ji emphasised that there was no shortcut to success.

As Jugdiep Singh ji states:

“Dreams are not what you see in sleep, dreams do not let you sleep.”

Patsha ji was proud of his hospital and would say that the hospital's doctors were the best.

Education was very dear to Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's heart. He wanted the doctors and the hospital staff to undergo training so that they could be up-to-date with the latest in their fields. The hospital runs eight DNB (Diploma of National Board) teaching programmes, which is also a tribute to Patsha ji's vision.

In the last ten years, the SPS Hospitals have provided free and subsidized treatment amounting to Rupees eleven crore per annum. This 350-bedded super specialty hospital with 130 doctors working round-the-clock provides service with a smile. About 350 nurses and 80 lab technicians work in the hospital and the total staff strength is 1,700.

The hospital is known for its advanced neonatal care. An infant from a poor family, weighing 530 grams, was brought to the hospital in 2015. The hospital's neonatal care department provided the best treatment and the child was saved. The

parents could never have afforded it. This is an instance of fulfilling the wish of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, who said:

“In our hospital, the poorest of the poor should receive the best treatment.”

The hospital is a gift from Patsha ji to the people of Punjab and neighbouring states. Patients come here from as far as Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya.

Satguru Partap Singh Hospitals are a tribute to Patsha ji’s vision and foresight, to his thought of creating an institution where seva is the guiding principle.

Satguru Uday Singh ji, the Chairman of SPS Hospitals, says:

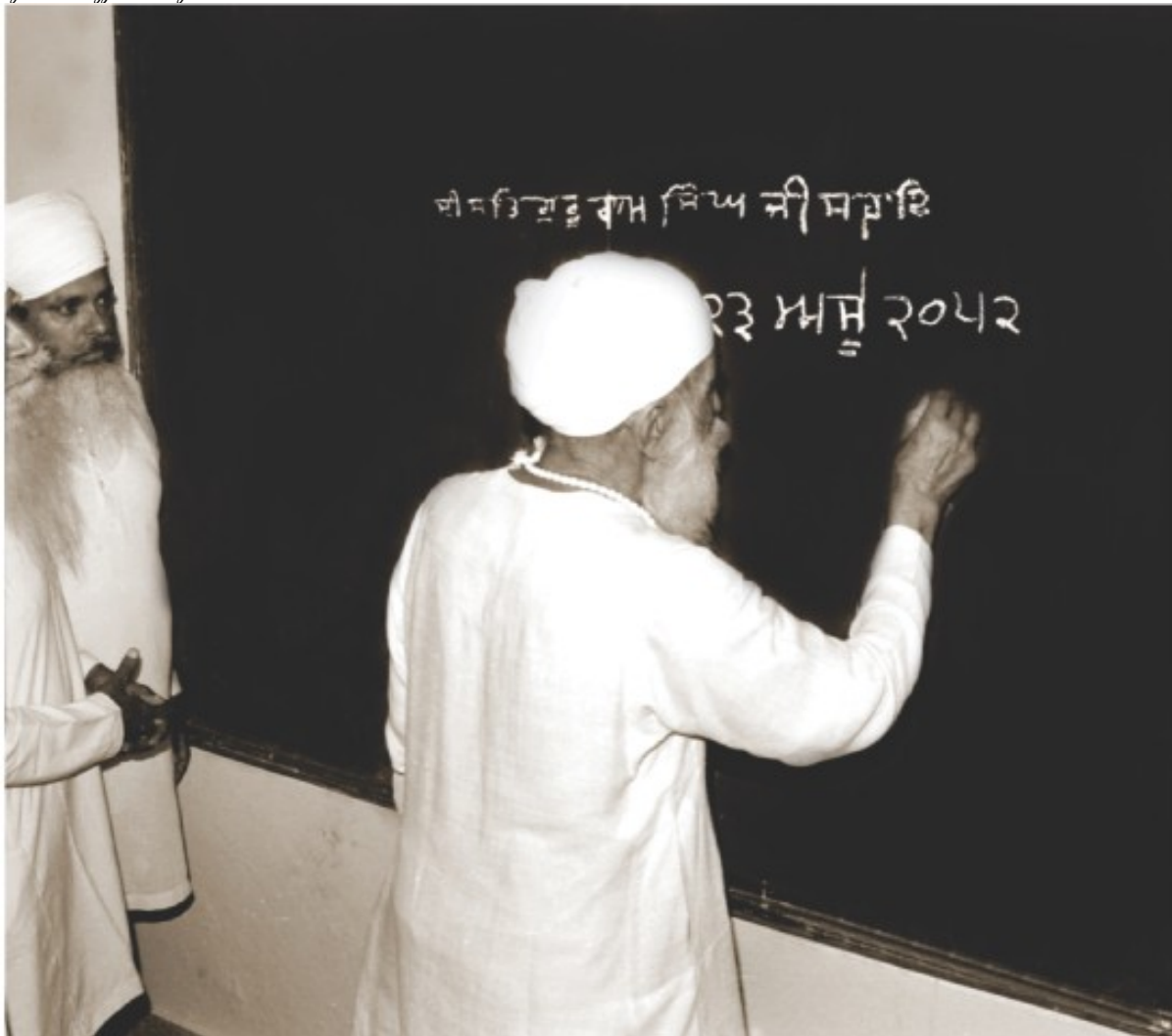
“The hospital has carried forward Satguru Jagjit Singh ji’s dream of bringing a world-class health facility to humanity.”

Satguru ji’s Contribution to Education

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji attached great importance to educating the Namdhari children. The Guru Hari Singh Vidyalya, which was founded in 1957 in Sri Jiwan Nagar, received the patronage of both Satguru Partap Singh ji and Patsha ji. The school catered to the educational needs of children of the villagers in and around Sri Jiwan Nagar and it was the first high school in that area. Fertile agricultural land was allotted to the school so that the income from the land could support its functioning. The vidyalya emphasized the all-round development of children.

In addition to the modern system of education, the students were encouraged to specialize in classical music, Punjabi language and literature. Since its inception, the vidyalya has been the centre of excellence for hockey. The students trained at this school won acclaim at the national and international level and many entered the Namdhari XI hockey team. Today, the school has grown into a college offering degree programmes in Commerce and Science. Over seven hundred boys and girls study in this college.

Under Patsha ji’s guidance, Satguru Partap Singh Academy was established in Sri Bhaini Sahib in 1988. The school is affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and provides quality education to children. The school imparts free coaching in tennis, hockey, basketball and badminton and trains them in music too.



At Satguru Partap Singh Academy, Sri Bhaini Sahib



Satguru ji with Dr. Manhohan Singh, S. Beant Singh and eminent Punjabi writers.

During Patsha ji's time, schools were established in New Delhi, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, and as far as Bangkok in Thailand. All these schools provide the type of

education which combines the best of modern and traditional knowledge systems. Modern International School Bangkok, founded in 1997 with the blessings of Patsha ji, promotes education with an emphasis on Indian cultural heritage.

Satguru Partap Singh International Public School affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) was started in 2010 in Sri Jiwan Nagar. It draws children from nearby villages and towns. With modern classrooms, well-equipped laboratories and Internet facilities, in terms of quality and infrastructure, this school equals any institution in metropolitan cities such as Delhi.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji also promoted research on Namdhari Sikh history and tradition. He sponsored the visits of scholars Jaswinder Singh ji to Rangoon and of Surjit Singh Jeet ji and Swaran Singh Snehi ji to London to study and collect documents on Namdhari Sikh history from archives and other sources.

The Satguru Ram Singh Chair was established in 1997 at Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwa Vidyalaya, Varanasi and at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, to promote research and study of ancient literatures and Namdhari Sikh history.

Further, irrespective of caste and creed, Patsha ji financially supported the education of innumerable poor students.

Satguru ji's passion for sports

From childhood, Patsha ji loved sports and games. His favourite games included kabaddi, badminton, hockey, football, wrestling and swimming. He was such a skilled swimmer that he could traverse across any river or canal even during floods and monsoons. Patsha ji took personal interest in grooming this culture of physical fitness amongst youngsters. Whenever and wherever he found talent, he made it a point to nurture it.

At Sri Jiwan Nagar Vidyalaya, he provided the best coaching facility to boys who played hockey. If the hockey player hailed from a poor family, Patsha ji instructed the school authorities to provide the player with a nutritious diet. Didar Singh ji, who represented India in international hockey tournaments, recalls the manner in which Patsha ji encouraged the players. He said that Patsha ji would arrive early in the morning to inspect the practice sessions.

Patsha ji provided hockey sticks and shoes to poor children who could not afford to buy them. The game of hockey became so popular that at a time about two hundred students trained at Sri Jiwan Nagar School.



Patsha ji was instrumental in making the Namdhari kachera and the round turban a matter of pride in the field of sports. The Namdhari Sikh dress was accepted with dignity even on the Olympics field. Through Patsha ji's efforts, a hockey stadium with astro turf has been built at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Recently, an astro turf of international standards has been laid at Sri Guru Hari Singh College in Sri Jiwan Nagar.

Most of the first generation hockey players belonged to the two villages in Sri Jiwan Nagar and they came from poor families. Patsha ji used to tell them:

“I want you to have good houses, cars and other facilities.”

Many Namdhari players represented the Indian hockey team in Olympics and various international hockey tournaments. Prominent among them are Didar Singh, Harpal Singh and Sardara Singh, the present captain of the Indian hockey team.

Today, the third generation players are on the field and hockey has become a heritage game. It has provided employment to many Namdhari Sikhs. They have got jobs in the government sector, police and defence departments through the sports quota.

Today, Sant Nagar (near Sri Jiwan Nagar) sports huge bungalows with nameplates proudly proclaiming “Captain, Indian hockey team,” “Member, Indian hockey team.”

Social welfare programmes

Patsha ji’s heart went out to the poor and suffering. His love embraced all the living creatures of this world. Be it a human being, bird, animal or a tree, he was very gentle and caring. Wiping others’ tears and bringing happiness into their lives was very natural to him.

Alexander the Great wept because he had no more worlds to conquer. On the contrary here was a conqueror who wept when he missed an opportunity to help the unfortunate. During one of his visits to Amritsar, a poor old Sikh approached Patsha ji and sought help as he had no one to take care of him. Patsha ji was walking towards the dais to address the gathering. He stopped and listened to the old man and asked him to meet him after the programme.

When Patsha ji was about to leave the venue, he asked his aides to locate the old man so that he could take him to Sri Bhaini Sahib. In the big crowd, the old Sikh could not be found. Patsha ji shed tears for losing an opportunity to serve the poor old soul. It is this kind of concern for the nameless destitute which made Patsha ji the true conqueror of hearts.

Many a time when Patsha ji visited the houses of devotees, if he saw old people who were not properly taken care of, he would tell their children:

“If you do not mind, I will take care of your parents. Please send them to Sri Bhaini Sahib.”

This is how the Elders’ Home was established in Sri Bhaini Sahib and Sri Jiwan Nagar.

These homes provide love and dignity to the elderly. They are engaged in doing seva and naam simran. They keep themselves busy with work in the langar or garden. Patsha ji would visit the elders' home and spend time with them, talking to them, bringing a smile to their face and even serving them. He would say that this service gave him utmost satisfaction because one does not expect anything in return from such seva.

Once, Patsha ji came to know that a famous Punjabi writer Surjit Khurshidi was not taken care of by his children. Patsha ji invited him to come to Sri Bhaini Sahib and offered to provide him shelter. The writer hesitated and said he was not worthy of Satguru's generosity as he was addicted to drinking. Patsha ji consoled him by saying that he was aware of his weakness and that if he resided in Sri Bhaini Sahib, he would give up the bad habit in due course of time.

Mr. Khurshidi shifted to Sri Bhaini Sahib and was a reformed person. During this phase, he authored two books about Punjabi language. One of the books was Jagjit Kosh, which was dedicated to Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. It is this large heartedness of accepting people as they are and then reforming them which made Patsha ji truly a Satguru.

On another occasion, Patsha ji read in the newspapers that Sardar Gurbaksh Singh Preetlari, a Punjabi novelist, was on his deathbed and needed help. Patsha ji sent his aide with money and medicines to his house and took care of him. Professor Sant Singh Sekhon, a prolific Punjabi writer and Marxist critic too was in need of support in his old age. Patsha ji graciously lent succour. The writer, who was a ripe old man, asked Patsha ji:

“Why are you helping me? I have not done anything for you.”

Patsha ji smiled and answered:

“You are serving our mother tongue; I am serving you.”

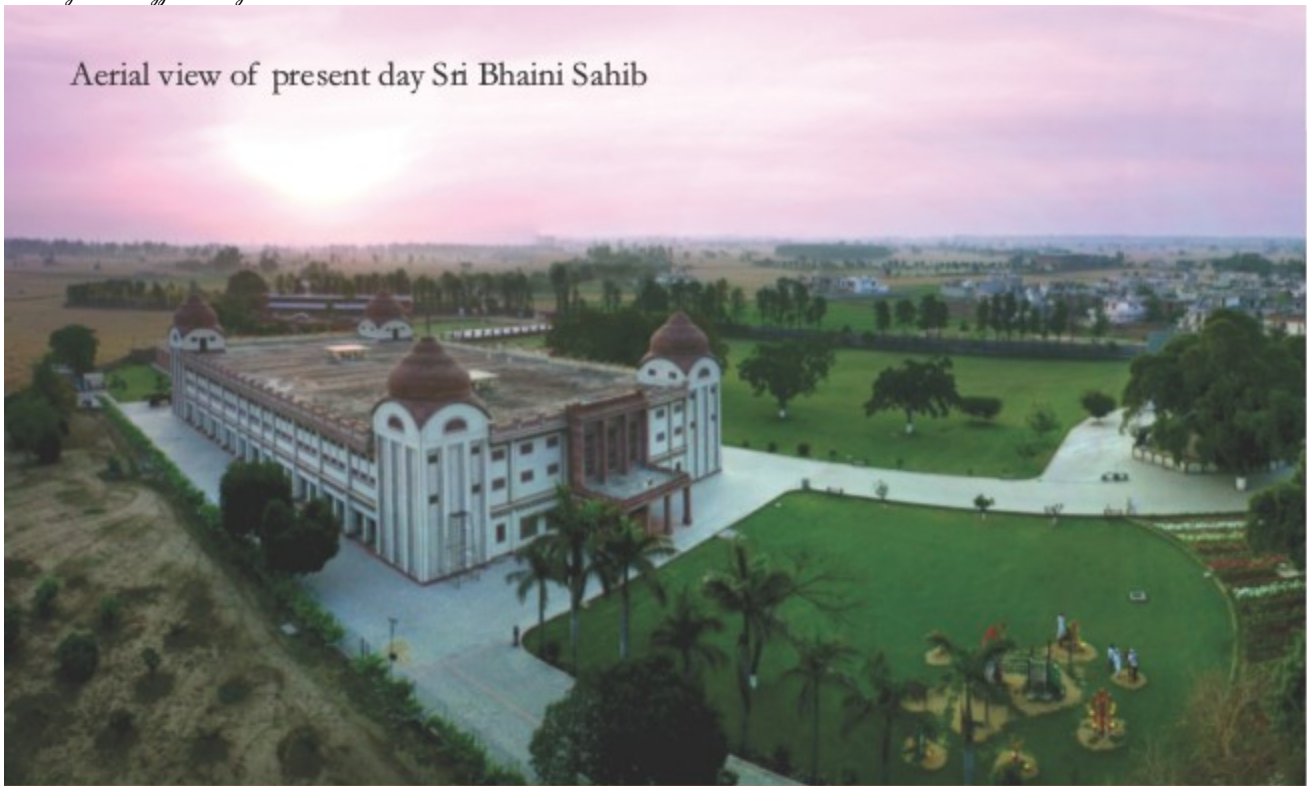
Many writers, artistes and freedom fighters received help from Patsha ji who had, in a way, become an institution by himself. What the government should have

done, he did singlehandedly for everyone. He did not help people for name, fame or votes. For him, service was a means to reach God. Sardar Jagjit Singh Anand and Navtej Singh, both writers, were among those who received the love, affection and financial support from Patsha ji.

Sri Bhaini Sahib and Namdhari Martyr Memorials

Sri Bhaini Sahib, the holy Gurdwara of Namdhari Sikhs, has a history of strife and struggle. When Satguru Ram Singh ji began to reside on this holy land, it began to attract disciples from all over the country. Ram Mandir, the langar, the Persian well, Ram Sarovar and Akal Bunga, the meditation rooms of the Satgurus, constituted Sri Bhaini Sahib of those days. After the deportation of Satguru Ram Singh ji to Rangoon in 1872, Satguru Hari Singh ji reigned over the Namdhari sangat and during his period, Sri Bhaini Sahib was a virtual prison under the British Raj.

Aerial view of present day Sri Bhaini Sahib





When Satguru Partap Singh ji ascended the throne in 1906, he began to get the mud structures of the holy village replaced by brick structures. But it was in the 1970s and 80s due to the efforts of Patsha ji that Sri Bhaini Sahib began to grow into a pilgrimage centre with all modern amenities. Patsha ji undertook the renovation of the historic Hari Mandir, Ram Mandir and Ram Sarovar. Mata Chand Kaur ji's role in building these holy structures is remarkable.

Patsha ji got Ram Mandir, the residence of the Satgurus, renovated in the year 2000 and dedicated this monument to the leaders of the Kuka movement. It preserves a precious leaf of Indian history for posterity. The majestic structure consists of the birthplace of Satguru Partap Singh ji and Patsha ji. The room where Mata Bhupinder Kaur ji lived is also well preserved. A rare photograph of Mata Bhupinder Kaur, mother of Patsha ji, decorates the walls of her room. The photograph was taken by Satguru Partap Singh ji a few months before her death.

The walls of the Ram Mandir are decorated with portraits of all Sikh gurus starting from Guru Nanak Dev ji. The meditation room of the Satgurus and the personal belongings of Satguru Ram Singh ji create a spiritual ambience. Patsha ji took personal interest to conserve this piece of history for generations to come. During Patsha ji's time, a park was created with miniature models depicting the events related to the deportation of Satguru Ram Singh ji to Rangoon. It is a major attraction for tourists and students.

The langar with the original loh installed by Satguru Ram Singh ji continues to pacify the hunger of millions who come to Sri Bhaini Sahib. Sevaks rolling out thousands of rotis every day and serving food with humility and respect, uphold the tradition of Atithi Devo Bhava.

Patsha ji paid special attention to the construction of Gol Mandir, the place where Satguru Partap Singh ji merged with the God. Satguru Partap Singh Mandir, the majestic prayer hall, is an architectural wonder. Built in 1980, it is a pillar-less hall which can hold over five thousand people. The hall has seen many great musical events and historic seminars. A new langar hall, quarters for sevaks and residential facilities for pilgrims were also added during Patsha ji's time.

Due to Patsha ji's efforts, Sri Bhaini Sahib was declared a sacred village. There are no liquor or meat shops in the vicinity of this gurdwara. Selling of tobacco in any form is banned. Eateries provide sattvic food. No tea or coffee is served. The government has provided water supply, sanitation and sewage system. There is also a post office, telephone exchange, a dispensary and stadium in this holy place.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was an effective leader. He delegated responsibilities to the right people. His choice of persons for carrying out any work was always correct. Surinder Singh Namdhari was the chosen man to execute the work related to procuring licenses and permissions for construction.

Patsha ji trusted this lieutenant of his so much that he authorized Surinder Singh with Power of Attorney when he was just nineteen years old. Patsha ji knew that any work entrusted to Surinder Singh would be accomplished. The site on which Satguru Partap Singh Hospitals, Ludhiana, stands was embroiled in legal issues. Under Patsha ji's guidance, Surinder Singh successfully cleared all the issues. Surinder Singh's contribution in clearing obstacles and facilitating the development of the Martyrs Memorial at Malerkotla, Raikot and Ludhiana is worth mentioning.

Those days Sri Bhaini Sahib was not connected with telephone services and Patsha ji would visit Surinder Singh's house at Ludhiana to make and receive telephone calls. During one such visit, Surinder Singh's wife complained to Patsha ji that her husband neglected his business and spent all his time in the service of the Guru. Patsha ji showered his blessings on the family and consoled the wife not to worry as the Satguru would take care of the welfare of his devotees. Soon after that, Surinder Singh's business flourished and the family attained peace and prosperity.

It was Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's wish to build a worthy memorial in honour of the sixty-six Kuka martyrs who had laid down their lives for the protection of cows and the motherland.

The land in Malerkotla on which the memorial had to be erected belonged to the government and had to be procured from the Ministry of Defence. Patsha ji used

his good offices and succeeded in convincing the government to allot the land to the Memorial Trust so that the noble memorial could be built. The sixty-six feet high steel structure is awe-inspiring. It is a worthy tribute to the valiant sons of Bharat.



Martyrs' Monument, Malerkotla

The foundation stone of the Malerkotla monument was laid on 24th June, 1993 by Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh Ji. The event was organized under the supervision and presence of the then Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Beant Singh. Thousands of Namdharis had come to pay their respects to the martyrs.

June is the hottest month of the year in Punjab. Patsha ji was concerned about the comfort of the audience. As per the wish of Satguru ji, the pandal was fitted with fans and coolers. But the cool winds and the summer drizzle arrived and turned the whole atmosphere in to a pleasant one. It looked as if Mother Nature herself was paying tribute to the brave Namdhari warriors who had laid down their lives for the motherland and the protection of cows.

Political stance

Satguru Partap Singh ji had established a close rapport with the Congress leaders such as Pandit Nehru and Saifuddin Kitchlew. His Holiness supported the actions

and strategies initiated by Congress to attain Independence. Patsha ji followed the policy of his father and maintained a close relationship with Congress leaders. In 1962, Patsha ji donated Rupees fifty-one thousand on behalf of the Namdharis to the Defence Fund and personally handed over the amount to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru ji.

Smt. Indira Gandhi, Sri Rajiv Gandhi, Dr. Manmohan Singh, Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Sardar Beant Singh and Sardar Parkash Singh Badal admired and shared a warm relationship with Patsha ji. Smt. Indira Gandhi highly valued the views and suggestions of Patsha ji in matters of politics in Punjab and other Northern states.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Smt. Indira Gandhi, Former Prime Minister of India



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Former Prime Minister of India



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji blesses Smt. Sonia Gandhi



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Former President of India



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Sri Pranab Mukherjee, present President of India



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, Sri Rajiv Gandhi and Giani Zail Singh



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji blessing Sri Narendra Modi, present Prime Minister of India and Sri Ashok Singhal

In 1977 when Smt. Gandhi lost the elections, Patsha ji told her:

“Madam, please do not lose heart, we are with you. You will come back to power soon.”

Political pundits had predicted that Smt. Indira Gandhi would not regain power for a decade. But their prediction proved wrong and within three years, in 1980, she captured Delhi again.

Sri Rajiv Gandhi too maintained the same regard for Patsha ji. Patsha ji's rapport with the leaders facilitated the implementation of welfare programmes meant for the uplift of the people.

In 1982, Patsha ji wished to celebrate the annual Hola Mohalla in Gola Gokarnath, Uttar Pradesh. Many advised him against holding the festival outside Punjab. But Patsha ji loved challenges and decided to go ahead with his decision.

Giani Zail Singh ji, who was the Home Minister then and Sri Rajiv Gandhi attended the event. They arrived in a helicopter and added colour to the occasion. Special trains were arranged to bring people from Punjab and the festival was a huge success. Thakur Uday Singh ji, who was then in charge of the Gola Gokarnath farm, recalls how the entire Namdhari Sikh sangat worked day and night to fulfill the wish of Patsha ji. After the programme, Patsha ji blessed Giani Zail Singh ji saying:

“We wish to see you as President of India.”

That blessing came true.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was an ajaatashatru, one who had no enemies. Leaders of all political parties had a cordial relationship with the Satguru ji. They respected him immensely and held him in high regard. At many programmes organised by Patsha ji, the dais was shared by leaders of Bharatiya Janata Party, Congress, Akali Dal, Communist Party of India and even CPM. Patsha ji was fearless in expressing his opinion. During one of the events, Patsha ji openly stated that even though

Namdhari Sikhs support Congress, it is the Akali government that has implemented many welfare measures for the Namdhari community.

The fifty long years of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's reign was truly the golden era of the Namdhari sangat. The Satguru's vision, spiritual strength and political wisdom, inspired Namdhari Sikhs to reach great heights in all walks of life. The community



gained national and international acclaim in the fields of Hindustani classical music, hockey, horticulture, agriculture and healthcare. The seed called Namdhari Khalsa, sown by Satguru Ram Singh ji in 1857, bloomed full during the reign of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, spreading the fragrance of peace, love and service.



7 CHAPTER



The Namdhari Sikh Diaspora

ਬਾਬੇ ਤਾਰੇ ਚਾਰ ਚੱਕ ਨੌ ਖੰਡ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਮੀ ਸਚਾ ਢੋਆ॥

Baabay Taaray Chaar Chak Nau Khand Prithamee Sachaa Ddhoaa.
Baba liberated all four directions and nine divisions of earth.

Exile from the motherland is a painful experience wrought with a sense of loss and insecurity. In 1890s, when the Namdhari Sikhs set out from Punjab to Thailand and Africa, they had to face many challenges. Along with the national identity as an Indian, the Namdhari Sikh migrant had to retain his spiritual and cultural moorings. This was not easy as in alien land he had to adapt himself to the ways of his new home. The numerous visits of Satguru Partap Singh ji and Satguru Jagjit Singh ji to Thailand and East Africa during their reigns gain significance in this context. Both the gurus realised the importance of building a strong sangat in these foreign lands and they were in constant touch with the Namdhari Sikhs living abroad. On the path of Guru Nanak, they aimed to spread the name of God “in all four directions and nine divisions of the earth.”

Today, a large number of Namdhari Sikhs live outside India. This diaspora is spread across Thailand, East Africa, United Kingdom, Europe, United States of

America, Canada, Middle East and Australia. The story of their migration is intertwined with the colonial history of India. It was impelled by the ambition of the colonial masters to expand their Empire and the Namdhari community's desire for economic advancement.

During the nineteenth century, right from Shanghai to Singapore, the British police had a large presence of Sikhs. In 1867, the British Raj recruited one hundred Sikhs from Punjab to serve in the police force in the Far East, especially in Hong Kong. Later, when the British withdrew from these Far Eastern colonies, the Sikhs stayed on to pursue various professions, especially trading and farming.

The expansion of the British Empire in Africa demanded the building of Railways in the interiors of the continent. The recruitment of Indian labourers and carpenters to work on the railway lines started in the late nineteenth century. In 1890, a recruiting agency operated from Punjab and sent carpenters and craftsmen to work on Ugandan Railways in East Africa.

Hindus, Sikhs and other Indians migrated and men who belonged to the Ramgarhia caste formed a considerable number among them. After the completion of the work on the Ugandan railways in 1901, only a few men returned to India while the majority of the migrants made East Africa their home.

The story of the Sikh diaspora is a saga of hard work and enterprise. It is possible that the first generation Namdhari Sikh migrants would have opted to leave Punjab due to poverty, drought and political persecution.

In 1860s, the British Raj felt threatened by the popularity of Satguru Ram Singh ji and the spread of the Kuka movement in Punjab. In order to curtail the growth of the movement the British government passed many repressive laws. The British feared that if unchecked, the movement might lead to a mutiny like the 1857 War of Indian Independence.

Political persecution of Namdharis during the time of Satguru Ram Singh ji is a well-known fact. Namdharis could not practise their religion openly. They could not gather in groups of more than five and were subjected to imprisonment and

harsh punishments for singing the Gurbani and holding religious discourses. There was a permanent Police Post at Sri Bhaini Sahib from 1872 till 1923 and police surveillance continued till 1947. These reasons could have also contributed to the migration of Namdharis to other lands.

While the working class Punjabi men voluntarily migrated to foreign countries for economic advancement, exile was forced on Satguru Ram Singh ji, the founder of the Namdhari Sant khalsa, by the British Raj. In 1872, soon after the Malerkotla incident, Satguru Ram Singh ji was deported without trial to Rangoon by the British on charges of waging a war against the British Empire.

For the first two years, Satguru ji's whereabouts was a guarded secret. In 1874, Baba Darbara Singh Grewal, a devout Namdhari, managed to get the address of the bungalow in Rangoon where Satguru Ram Singh ji was confined. He sought the permission of Satguru Hari Singh ji to visit Rangoon and meet Satguru Ram Singh ji. Baba Darbara Singh disguised himself as a Pathan and reached Calcutta. From there, he sailed by ship to Rangoon.

The Voyles Road bungalow where Satguru ji was imprisoned was surrounded by a ditch and armed security men kept a strict vigil over it. Yet, Baba Darbara Singh managed to meet the Satguru and narrated to His Holiness the miserable condition of Namdharis under the British rule.

After 1875, a steady stream of disciples started visiting Rangoon to meet the Satguru. It was not an easy journey. They travelled up to Calcutta and boarded the ship to Rangoon. Many a time they disguised themselves as astrologers, traders and priests. Often the Namdharis were caught by the British officers and mercilessly beaten or imprisoned. Nothing deterred the disciples from undertaking this perilous venture as they pined to have a glimpse of their Satguru. Life without His Holiness was unbearable. Even Namdhari women disciples set out on this holy mission. The following verse from the Gurbani captures their intense desire to meet the Satguru:

ਸਮੁੰਦ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਬਹੁ ਖਾਰਾ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੁ ਲੰਘਿ ਗੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਜਾਈ ॥

Samund sagar hovai baho khara gursikh langh gur peh jai.
**Even though the oceans and the salty seas are very vast,
 the Gursikh will cross over it to get to his Guru.**

ਜਿਉ ਪ੍ਰਾਣੀ ਜਲ ਬਿਨੁ ਹੈ ਮਰਤਾ ਤਿਉ ਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰ ਬਿਨੁ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਈ ॥

Jio parani jal bin hai marta tio sikh gur bin mar jai.
Just as the mortal dies without water, so does the Sikh die without the Guru.

ਜਿਉ ਧਰਤੀ ਸੋਭ ਕਰੇ ਜਲੁ ਬਰਸੈ ਤਿਉ ਸਿਖੁ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਬਿਗਸਾਈ ॥

Jio dharti sobh kare jal barsai tio sikh gur mil bigsai.
Just as the earth looks beautiful when the rain falls, so does the Sikh blossom forth meeting the Guru.

Satguru Ram Singh ji wrote in one of the hukamnamas how the British were scared of him and feared that he might incite Indians to rebel against the British rule. Hence he warned his disciples not to come in large numbers to meet him at Rangoon as the British would move him to another location. He advised them:

“Please do not visit this place...Instead, spend your time in prayers and reciting the Gurbani.”

The British authorities could not put an end to the visitors from India to Rangoon. The continuous and confidential correspondence between Satguru Ram Singh ji and his disciples in India made the British government nervous. As a result, on 18 September, 1880, they shifted him to a special jail in Mergui, Burma. Mergui was a remote island and Satguru ji missed the love of the sangat very much.

After five years of solitary confinement at Mergui, on 29th November 1885, the guards could not find Satguru Ram Singh ji in his cell. He had disappeared without a trace. To avoid public ridicule, the Deputy Commissioner issued a certificate that Satguru ji had died of diarrhoea. This news was rejected by his brother Satguru Hari Singh ji because Satguru Ram Singh ji had warned the sangat not to believe the lies of the white ruler about his death. His Holiness had assured his followers that he would be in human form for two hundred and fifty years. Even today, the Namdhari Sikhs wait for the return of Satguru Ram Singh ji to the motherland.

Inder Singh Chakravarti, the Namdhari historian, states that the deportation of Satguru ji to Rangoon was a fortunate development for natives of Rangoon.

Satguru ji “introduced the Khalsa panth... and several people became Singhs due to his charisma.” (Source: Joginder Singh, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh, Page 157).

Another celebrated Punjabi exile of the nineteenth century is Maharaja Dalip Singh, the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, the British annexed Punjab and his son Dalip Singh, who was called a “king without a kingdom”, was exiled to England in 1853 by the British Government. Dalip Singh spent all his adult life in Europe and the colonial masters did not allow even his mortal remains to reach India.

After the mysterious disappearance of Satguru Ram Singh ji in November 1885 from the Mergui prison in Burma, some of the Namdhari Sikhs who had followed him settled in that country. Some would have moved over to Singapore and Thailand as returning home did not promise freedom, prosperity or security.

Bangkok was the favourite destination of Indian traders and labour in the nineteenth century. The ruler of Thailand, Emperor Rama V, was a progressive thinker who wanted to modernise Thailand. He encouraged the building of railways and efficient roadways. He had visited India to study the development and modernisation of India under the British rule. A large number of men from Madras and Punjab migrated to Thailand during the nineteenth century as there was ample opportunity for skilled labour to procure jobs in the Far Eastern colonies. Before the days of air travel, the Punjabi migrants reached Bangkok through Burma.

Thailand is the first place outside India where Namdharis settled in large numbers. In the 1890s, the first wave of migration to Thailand occurred. Laddha Singh Narula was among the first Namdhari traders to go to Bangkok from West Punjab. Seth Gurbaksh Singh, Seth Bishan Singh, Sant Phula Singh, Sant Sher Singh Manchanda and Inder Singh Narula were among those who went to Thailand for trade. These traders settled in Bangkok, Lampang and Chiang Mai.

Sant Dhyan Singh Varn, who went to Bangkok in 1911, did much work in propagating the Namdhari faith and gave naam to many seekers. Sant Sunder

Singh Fareed ji and Sant Nihal Singh Chawla also contributed to the growth of the Namdhari faith in Thailand.

In 1915, Seth Bishan Singh ji established the Namdhari gurdwara in Bangkok where devotees learnt kirtans, the Gurbani and Gurmukhi.

Life of the first generation Namdhari migrants to Thailand was a story of strife and struggle. Most of them traded in textiles. They succeeded in life through sheer hard work. They practised Guru Nanak's dictum of earning through honest labour and led a life of piety and simplicity. They retained their Punjabi culture, language and traditions.

In 1934, Satguru Partap Singh ji visited Thailand for the first time. His mother Mata Jivan Kaur ji also accompanied him. On his way back, he went to Rangoon, Burma, to enquire about Satguru Ram Singh ji, who had been imprisoned there for nine long years by the British.

The government had kept a vigil on Satguru Partap Singh ji's movements and his first trip to Thailand was noted in British records. After Satguru Partap Singh ji's return to India, Satguru ji arranged the Sri Guru Nanak Naam Leva Sarab Sampardai Conference in 1934 in Sri Bhaini Sahib and the Hindu-Sikh Milaap Conference in 1943.

The Thai Namdharis actively participated in the Indian freedom struggle. Seth Tarlok Singh and Seth Gurbaksh Singh of Thailand helped and supported Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, freedom fighter and commander of the Azad Hind Fauj, in his struggle for India's freedom. When the tricolour flew in the Indian skies, on 15th August 1947, the Namdharis celebrated the historic moment by hoisting the Indian national flag at the gurdwara in Bangkok.

The second wave of Namdhari migration to Thailand took place during the Partition of India. In March 1947, at the Sheikhpura Bedad Hola Mela, Satguru Partap Singh ji advised the Punjabis to cross over to East Punjab as the Partition of the country was imminent. At this time, many Namdharis moved over to Thailand from West Punjab.

During his reign, Satguru Partap Singh ji made twenty-two trips to Thailand. He educated the Namdharis living abroad on the importance of retaining their Namdhari identity and legacy. Satguru ji's visits were aimed at establishing the Namdhari sangat on a firm foundation. His Holiness baptised many people and gave naam to sincere seekers. He also appointed subas to carry on the work of God in these faraway lands where religion was an important link with the motherland.

Satguru Partap Singh ji delivered discourses at different places in Thailand from 1948 to 1959. The Thai devotees recorded those discourses which are today a most cherished treasure of the Namdhari sangat. Under the guidance of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, Smt Beant Kaur compiled them. The discourses provide a guideline to the sangat on righteous living.

Satguru ji advised the Namdharis of Thailand on the need to live in peace and harmony with Indians and foreigners. His Holiness said:

“The most essential thing is our relationship - first being a Punjabi and then a Sikh. Then we come close to each other, all being Indians. In this foreign country, we should never differentiate with anybody because of his being an Akali, a Kuka, or a clean shaven Sikh, or on his attire, on whether he wears a black turban or a white turban. The most essential thing is that all Sikhs should read the Gurbani in the morning.” (Source: Discourses of Satguru Partap Singh ji, Vol. 1, Page 22)

The sermons focus on character-building and moral strength of the disciples. Satguru ji desired that his disciples meditate on the naam daily and stated:

“Till your soul does not become strong by meditating on the naam, you cannot contribute to the progress of your country, you cannot sacrifice, you cannot do any beneficence.” (Source: Discourses of Satguru Partap Singh ji, Vol. 1, Page 22) Satguru ji addressed the Namdhari women in Thailand and said: “The ladies today neither have to grind wheat nor spin cotton so they have enough time, which they should use in contemplation of the naam. This is essential so that their children are born saints, warriors and Gursikhs...” (Ibid: Page 38)

Satguru ji advised Namdhari parents to teach Gurmukhi and Punjabi to their children so that they could read the Gurbani.

His Holiness advocated education for both boys and girls from a young age and desired that his disciples learn the Gurbani by heart. The Satguru firmly believed that the power of true knowledge destroys all sins and desired that modern education should be combined with knowledge of religion and scriptures.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji realised this dream of his father and founded the International School in Bangkok, which imparts quality modern education along with teaching of Punjabi and Gursikhi.

In February 1948, after a gap of fourteen years, Satguru Partap Singh ji visited Thailand the second time. He implored the Namdharis in Thailand to help their brothers in India. Many Namdharis had come from West Punjab and settled in Sri Jiwan Nagar, Mandi and other places due to the efforts of the Satguru during the Partition of India. The Thailand Namdharis generously donated large quantities of clothes, blankets and foodgrains, which were distributed to the migrants.

In 1961, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji visited Thailand for the first time as Satguru. He continued the work started by his father and was received with the same affection and respect by the diaspora and the local population.

Rachhpal Singh Sewak, the aide of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, recalls that one day, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji and his entourage were travelling by train to Chiang Mai from Bangkok. The Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE), a Thai gentleman, asked one of the disciples:

“May I have the glimpse of your Guru ji?”

He had earlier seen Satguru Partap Singh ji. The disciple answered:

“The Guru ji whom you met last time has left for his heavenly abode. His elder son is now on the throne. You can meet him.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji blessed the TTE and gave him fruits.

The TTE was very happy. He told Patsha ji:

“You have also blessed me with fruits the same way as your father used to do.”

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji visited Thailand one hundred and thirtyfour times from 1961 to 2008. During these trips, he strengthened the Namdhari sangat. He spread the message of world peace, non-violence and vegetarianism at the international level. In October 1978, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji laid the foundation of the Temple of Peace in Rajburi, Thailand. Delegates from thirty-two countries attended this programme and brought a handful of soil from their respective countries, which was used for laying the foundation stone of the temple.

On visiting the ashram of Dr. Suchart Kosol, the Peace Ambassador of Thailand, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji noted that peace and happiness prevailed in the ashram as the people residing there observed silence and practised vegetarianism. No animals, not even snakes, were killed in the ashram and Satguru ji wrote in the Visitors Book at the ashram:

“We all should learn from this how to recognise somebody’s religion and how to recognise somebody’s goodness. This is the sign of peace and happiness for the entire world.”

Satguru ji worked with Major-General Chamlong Srimuang, ExGovernor of Bangkok, for the cause of vegetarianism. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji attended the World Vegetarian Conference held in 1999 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Most of the first generation Namdhari Sikhs who migrated from Delhi, Mandi and Punjab to Thailand, married Namdhari women from India on the advice of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. Patsha ji encouraged the Namdharis settled abroad to find an Indian spouse because the continuity of the Namdhari culture depended on the women brought up in the Namdhari way. His Holiness was instrumental in arranging the marriage of Mahtab Singh ji, a businessman settled in Thailand and

Kawaljeet Kaur, who belongs to a Namdhari family from Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. Their household considers the Satguru as their God and father.

Kawaljeet Kaur recalled several instances in her life which throw light on the strong bonding which exists between the Satguru and the devotee who totally surrenders her will at the feet of the Guru. Her life exemplifies the spiritual elevation of a soul through sincere devotion.

When Kawaljeet Kaur was twenty-four years old, she fell seriously ill. She was hospitalised in Chandigarh and the doctors could not diagnose her ailment. The doctors had given up hope that she would live and Kawaljeet also expressed a desire to die at the feet of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji in Sri Bhaini Sahib. Without the knowledge of the doctors, her father took her to Sri Bhaini Sahib. At the gurdwara, she was too weak to speak. Her mother said to Satguru Jagjit Singh ji:

“Patsha ji, my daughter is too young to die. She has a young son to take care of. Please save her from death.”

Satguru ji replied:

“Take her to Dr. Musa. He will diagnose her ailment.”

The mother said:

“Satguru ji, you are everything to us. We don’t want to go anywhere. Please do kirpa.”

With these words, she lifted the drooping face of Kawaljeet Kaur and said:

“Do not cry, beti. Look at Satguru ji’s face.”

Slowly, Kawaljeet lifted her eyes towards the Satguru and beheld a dazzling brightness. Rays of light were emanating from His face. She heard the reassuring voice of the Satguru:

“Why are you crying? There is nothing wrong with you.”

Kawaljeet got up slowly and became aware of her surroundings. Mata Chand Kaur ji walked towards her with parsad. She fed her small morsels of parsad with her own hands. After fifteen days in the hospital, Kawaljeet was taking some solid food from the hands of the holy mother. This brought life back to her.

Kawaljeet wanted to stay in Sri Bhaini Sahib but Satguru ji instructed:

“Beti, go back to the hospital. You will be alright. I am with you.”

Kawaljeet went back to the hospital where she was being treated.

The following morning, the doctors were surprised to see that Kawaljeet had got up early in the morning, had taken a bath, and was performing naam simran. Everything about her seemed normal. To everyone’s surprise, the doctor announced that her ailment had been diagnosed as a heart issue.

The doctor said with confidence:

“We will start the treatment tomorrow.”

This episode illustrates that Satguru, the saviour protects true devotees and shows the way. After a few days, Kawaljeet underwent a heart surgery in Thailand and regained her health. Even though the doctors said that she could not become a mother again, by Satguru ji’s grace, later she was blessed with a second son. Later, whenever her family advised her not to strain herself in the service of the sangat, she would say:

“This new life of mine has been given by Satguruji for His seva. Don’t stop me from serving him. He gave me a new janam, it is dedicated to him.”

As one among the many devotees of the Satguru, she expressed her emotions to His Holiness.

“I do not know sangeet to sing and please you. Like your aides, I cannot serve you. I cannot do anything for you. The only thing I know is to keep my head at your charan.”

Satguru ji smiled and said:

“That’s all a devotee needs to do.”

Satguru through the eyes of Namdhari diaspora in Africa

The migration of the working class Punjabis to Africa gained momentum in the 1890s. The British Raj sent engineers, carpenters and other skilled labour to different parts of Africa to work on the roads and railways. These workers were transported by ship and had to face a hazardous journey. They boarded the ship from Mumbai to Mombasa, Kenya. If they survived the journey, they reached the shores of Africa and trekked on to the interiors. Life was harsh for the first generation expatriates as they had to work on an alien land filled with thick jungles, wild animals, hostile tribes, harsh taskmasters and overseers.

There were very few Namdharis among the early immigrants. The early settlers of Indian origin lived together practising whatever form of religion they had carried with them. The immigrants had little contact with the motherland. Engrossed in the struggle to come up in life, religion did not play a major role in their lives then.

After India gained independence in 1947, Satguru Partap Singh ji turned his attention towards strengthening the Namdhari sangat in East Africa. In 1953, when Satguru Partap Singh ji visited Kenya for the first time, there was a notable excitement in the entire Indian community. Arjun Singh Virdee, a Namdhari residing in Nairobi, made arrangements for this trip. An announcement was made that the Satguru would stay only in the houses of vegetarians. Those days, most of the Sikhs in East Africa ate meat and it was very difficult to find such houses.

Satguru ji baptized a number of Sikhs with amrit during this trip and there was a keen desire among the Sikhs to become Namdharis. Before the second visit of

Satguru ji to East Africa, many households had turned vegetarian and served Namdhari meals cooked with water from natural sources.

Satguru Partap Singh ji visited East Africa four times and in 1959, he visited Kampala, Uganda. These visits of the Satguru ji brought together the entire Sikh community living in East Africa. With great enthusiasm and devotion, women would grind wheat, make rotis and run the langar. Satguru Partap Singh ji appointed Suba Lal Singh and Suba Harnam Singh to take care of the sangat in Kenya and Suba Preetam Singh to work in Uganda. Later, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji appointed Suba Avtar Singh, Suba Darshan Singh, Suba Sohan Singh and Suba Satnam Singh to take care of the affairs of the sangat in East Africa.

Satguru Partap Singh ji used to stay in the house of Suba Harnam Singh, a dedicated disciple. During one of the visits of Satguru Partap Singh ji to Kenya, Suba Harnam Singh had bought a new car and wanted Satguru ji to sit in it first. The Suba and a helper pushed the car from the showroom to the Eastleigh airport, which was five kilometres away, as they did not want to use the car before Satguru ji blessed it by sitting in it.

Once, Satguru Partap Singh ji was staying in the house of Mata Harjinder Kaur, mother of Kuldeep Singh Chana, who is now Suba of Southall, UK. It was the day of his departure to India and Mata Harjinder Kaur wanted to serve him fresh milk. She had gone to the cow shed to milk the cow and got delayed. Satguru ji could wait no longer for Mata ji and the entourage left for the airport. When Mata Harjinder Kaur came to know of this, she said:

“He is not supposed to leave without partaking of the milk.”

In a short time, Satguru ji and the entourage came back from the airport as something had gone wrong with the aircraft and it could not take off. After returning from the airport Satguru ji told her:

“Please serve the milk and allow us to leave. We do not want the flight to be delayed again.”

Satguru Partap Singh ji encouraged women like Mata Harjinder Kaur to organise the activities of the Namdhari sangat in Nairobi. She was a very strong woman and an effective leader. If a dispute had to be settled by admonishing someone, she would not hesitate to do so. She used to organise the daily gathering of sangat for langar and other related activities. Satguru ji entrusted to her the responsibility of giving naam to the people and encouraged her to carry on the activities of the sangat.

Satguru Partap Singh ji and Satguru Jagjit Singh ji were the beacons in the lives of the Namdharis living abroad. They provided the necessary guidance to these disciples at times of crisis in their lives. One such story is that of Paramjit Singh Neote's father.

Paramjit Singh Neote is a prominent Namdhari entrepreneur who is settled in Ireland. His grandfather migrated from India to East Africa as the British recruited him to work on the Ugandan railways. Neote recalls the tough living conditions of the first and second generations of migrants. His father, Giani Teja Singh Neote was a carpenter who eked out a living from part time jobs he got. He had to take care of his wife and five children and lived in a one-room tenement.

Neote's family were Sikhs but were not ardent followers of the Namdhari Sikh gurus. They read the Gurbani and had heard about the power of the Guru and naam. When Satguru Partap Singh ji visited Kenya in 1959, Neote's father met him with the hope of improving his material conditions. Giani Teja Singh Neote said:

“Satguru ji, jobs are very scarce and I have a large family to support. I am leading a hand-to-mouth existence. Please bless and help me.”

Satguru Partap Singh ji replied:

“Instead of money, what if I kill your desire?”

Neote was puzzled with this answer. Yet, he replied:

“Sat bachan.” - “Whatever you say is true.”

After the darshan of the Satguru, his fortunes changed. There was no shortage of work and Giani Teja Singh Neote prospered. Today, all his children are wealthy, well-settled and are devout Namdharis.

When Patsha ji visited Kenya in 1960, Paramjit Singh Neote was a twelve-year-old boy. At the congregation venue Paramjit worked as a volunteer in the shoe stand section. As Patsha ji walked out of the venue, he looked at the boy and said:

“You are doing the best job. Youngster, why don’t you change your turban to Namdhari style?”

Paramjit, who was on the threshold of his teens, was very conscious about his looks. He was proud of his coloured turban and feared that his friends would laugh at him if he wore a round, white, Namdhari turban. Hence, he told Patsha ji:

“Next year, I will wear the Namdhari turban.”

Patsha ji gave him a hug and said:

“Ok, I will be there.”

The next year, Paramjit failed the Kenyan preliminary exam and his future was bleak. His peers laughed at him and at home, he was neglected. Yet, he was proud of his looks and friends.

The following year, Patsha ji visited Kenya. At the camp, Patsha ji called Paramjit Neote in and asked:

“Young man, are you ready to change your turban?”

Paramjit answered:

“No, Patsha ji, next year.”

As he walked out of Patsha ji's room, Paramjit met Sant Ram Singh ji, a spiritual person. When Sant Ram Singh got to know what transpired inside Patsha ji's room, he grabbed Paramjit by his hand and walked him back to Patsha ji's place and said:

“Bow down, youngster. Accept the turban and say satbachan.”

Satguruji was waiting. He looked into Paramjit's eyes, blessed him and tied the Namdhari turban around his head. From then on, Paramjit Neote's life changed completely. He said:

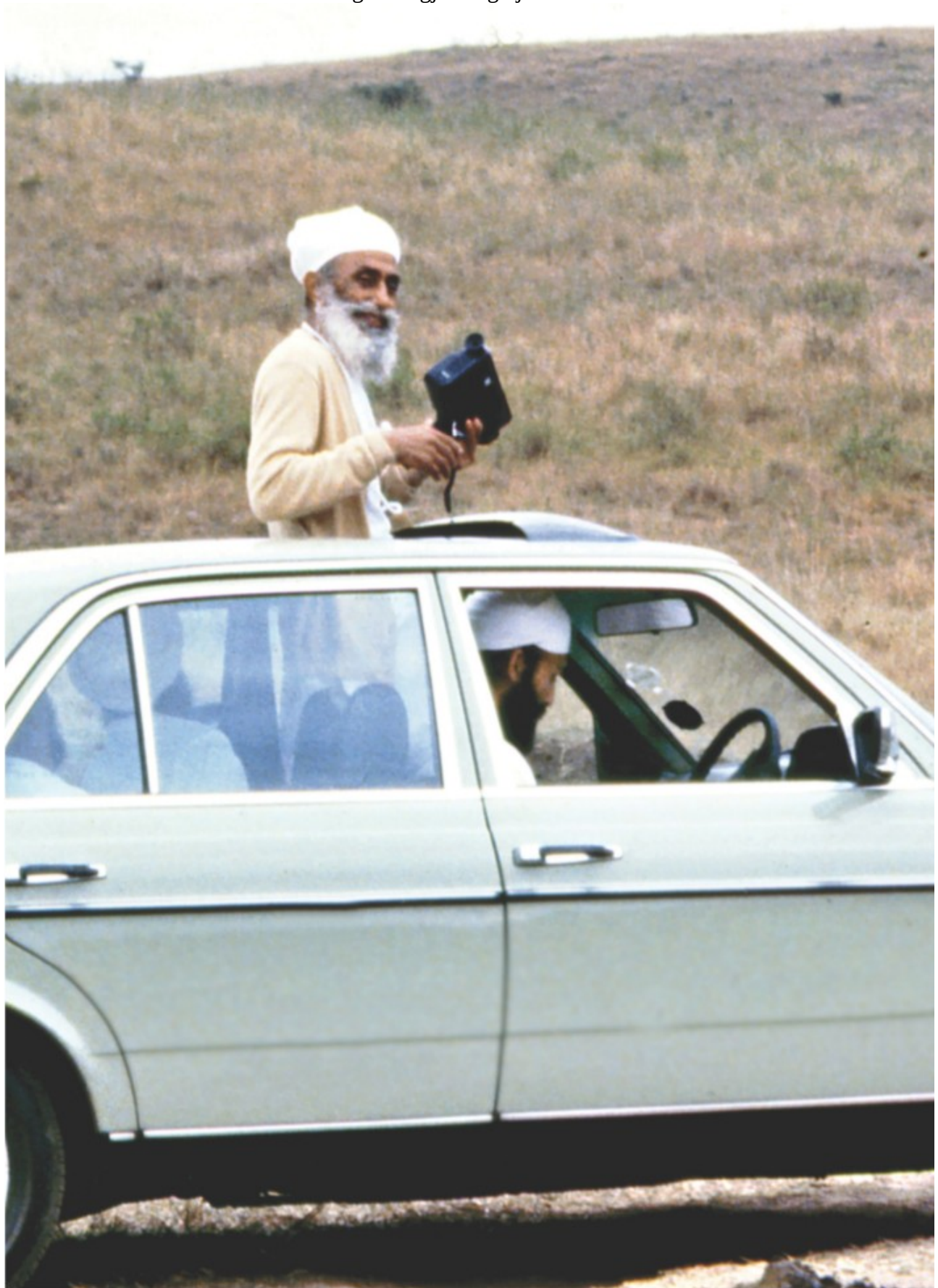
“I cut off my connections with bad friends and started to focus on studies.”

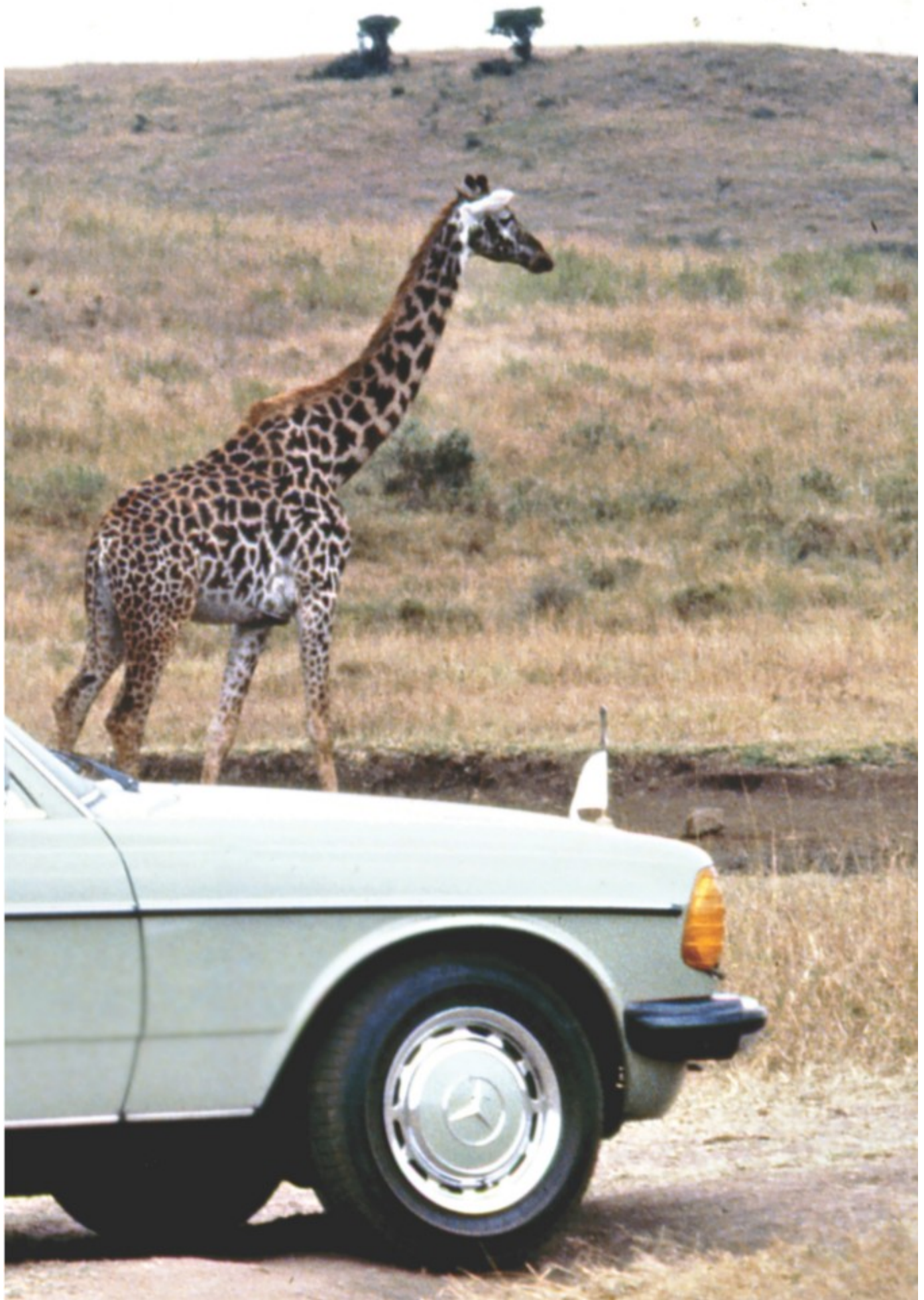
Today, Paramjit Neote is President of Namdhari sangat in Ireland where sixteen Namdhari families live. He owns a flourishing business and provides employment to many Indians, all by the blessings of Patsha ji.

It was in 1962 that Satguru Jagjit Singh ji first visited East Africa as a Satguru. In 1964, he appointed Darshan Singh ji as the Suba of Kenya. By then a large number of Namdharis had settled in Nairobi and a few families were located in Kisumu, Kenya.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Charles Njonjo, the then Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Kenya









Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with
His Highness Bhumibol Adulyadej, King of Thailand



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji blessing Thai children

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji made it a point to visit Suba Satwinder Singh, a devotee dear to him who lived in Kisumu. On many occasions, Suba Satwinder Singh felt the protective hands of the Satguru leading him through difficult times. Once, some enemies had planned to kill him through witchcraft. The witch doctor could do no harm to Satwinder Singh and is said to have told others that an old man in white clothes stood behind Satwinder Singh and protected him. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's kirpa saved him from harm. Who else could have performed that miracle?

The expatriate Namdhari sangat in East Africa grew stronger each day and their bonding with the Guru had grown manifold. Whenever Patsha ji visited them, the Namdhari families vied with each other to host His Holiness.

The city of Arusha in Tanzania houses a few Sahajdhari Namdharis, who originate from Malwa region of Punjab. Sahajdharis take naam but are not baptised with amrit. The first child of the family becomes a Namdhari while the others follow the ideology. Sahajdhari Namdharis are successful businessmen and Satguru Jagjit Singh ji used to visit Arusha and bless them.

Lala Budh Ram ji, Lala Bir Chand ji and Lala Lekh Ram ji are first generation Sahajdhari Namdharis settled in Arusha. They are Agarwals and trading is their forte. They hail from Bhatinda, Punjab. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji held them up as role models for others to emulate. These businessmen could perfectly combine spirituality with their material pursuits. The Sahajdhari businessmen say:

“If eight hours make a full working day, it takes eight hours of prayer to make a full Namdhari.”

Their faith in the Satguru was absolute and continues to be so.

Mahesh Chand, son of Lala Budh Ram, asked Suba Satnam Singh ji:

“Sant ji, Namdhari maryada is very demanding. Why can't Satguru ji relax the rules?”

Suba Satnam Singh ji replied:

“It is a matter of discipline. If Satguru ji relaxes the rule for one person, others will also expect the same. It’s very easy to go down but very difficult to climb up the ladder of spirituality. So one has to follow the maryada.”

Starting from modest beginnings, Lala Budh Ram ji’s family has risen to be one of the biggest business houses in Tanzania.

Early in his career, Lala Budh Ram ji had to transport goods from Arusha to a remote village where he had a shop. He was travelling uphill in a loaded truck on a dangerous mountain road. Suddenly the African driver said:

“Mr Agarwal, the brakes have failed.”

Lala Budh Ram ji said:

“Man, stop the vehicle!”

As the truck sped down the hill, Budh Ram ji urged the driver:

“Jump out if you want to save your life.”

The driver did as instructed. Budh Ram ji was alone in the truck. He prayed to the Satguru:

“Oh Satguru, you are my only hope. I have a wife and small children to feed. Please save me.”

At that juncture, he saw the figure of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji standing on the step of the right side of the truck saying to him:

“One who has a Satguru with him cannot be harmed.”

Within minutes, the truck crashed into the mountain side. After two days, when Lala Budh Ram ji opened his eyes, he found himself on a hospital bed. He saw nurses moving around him and speaking Swahili. They informed him that he was found unconscious on the spot of the accident and brought to the hospital by the villagers. He was treated for some minor injuries and was discharged. Lala Budh Ram ji attributed this miraculous escape from death to the blessings of the Satguru.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji has performed such innumerable miracles in the lives of his devotees and they are ever grateful to their guardian angel.

Suba Satnam Singh ji, now in Australia, recalls the several visits of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji to East Africa from 1962 to 2009. During these visits, His Holiness met senior politicians, religious and community leaders who were totally mesmerised by his personality. Satguru ji met Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, on several occasions and they became good friends.

Satguru ji visited the president's residence in his native village, Gatundu, and offered to construct an operation theatre at Gatundu Self Help Hospital. The project was completed in 1969 by the Namdhari sangat of East Africa. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji inspired Dr. Dalip Singh Kharbanda from India to serve in the hospital for a year.

The Satguru ji also met Daniel Arap Moi, the second president of Kenya. In 1998, Satguru ji visited Nairobi to attend a conference of Hindu Council of Africa. During that visit, there was a massive explosion at the US Embassy in Nairobi and hundreds of innocent lives were lost. Satguru ji visited the site of the explosion, met the authorities and instructed the Namdhari sangat to organise assistance to the injured.

Whenever Patsha ji was in East Africa, he was sure to visit national parks as he loved wildlife. Some of the parks he went to are Amboseli National Park, Maasai Mara, Lake Manyara National Park, Tsavo, Ngorongoro and Serengeti. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji would visit these parks along with his entourage immediately after the morning prayers so that they could get the best glimpse of the animals. Even

wild animals were enamoured of him and there is an iconic photograph of a monkey touching his feet in the Maasai Mara National Park.

With Satguru ji's blessings, the Namdhari expatriates celebrated several festivals including the Hola Mohalla in Dar-es-Salaam in 1985.

The Namdhari community settled in East Africa has made significant contribution to the Namdhari sangat. They have generously donated to the social welfare programmes and for the spiritual and cultural activities of the sangat initiated by the Satguru ji.

When Narinder Singh, the son of late Suba Darshan Singh ji, visited India with his mother in 1992, he remembered that the family had to fulfil their late father's wish to sponsor the expenses of the Hola Mela. The family requested the Satguru for an opportunity to perform this special seva. Satguru ji granted the wish. The family sponsored the entire expenses of the 1994 Hola Mela.

It was a huge responsibility and the brothers worked very hard to honour this undertaking. Placing their trust in the Satguru, they went ahead.

When the quarterly payments had to be made for the expenses of the mela, an important project from a Japanese company materialised. Suba Satnam Singh, the eldest son of late Suba Darshan Singh ji, made the first three payments on time. When the fourth and final payment had to be sent to India, there was a delay. The Japanese company had not released the amount due to them and they did not have enough savings to send the cheque to Sri Bhaini Sahib.

The date of the mela was approaching fast and they were yet to procure the necessary funds. Already, thrice, travel bookings to India had been made and cancelled as Suba Satnam Singh could not procure the promised amount of money. Faced with this crisis, Suba Satnam Singh and his brothers prayed fervently to Satguru Jagjit Singh to save them from this dilemma.

On the day of the departure to Sri Bhaini Sahib, Suba Satnam Singh ji heaved a sigh of relief when his brother Narinder Singh from Mombasa called up to say that the payment due to them had been released by the Japanese company.

Suba Satnam Singh ji made arrangements for the amount to reach the airport and rushed to board the flight to India the same evening. He reached the airport at six o'clock in the evening and had to exchange the Kenyan Shillings for Indian currency. At the counter, he realised that the cash had been left behind at home. There was no time to go back and get the money as the final call for departure had been made. Crestfallen, he boarded the plane and waited for the flight to take off. He prayed with all his heart to Satguru ji to show the way.

After a few minutes, the voice of the pilot came over the public address system that the flight had been delayed by half an hour due to a technical hitch. The passengers waited patiently and after an hour, the pilot announced that the flight had been cancelled. He requested the passengers to board the flight the following day.

No one could have been happier than Suba Satnam Singh ji to hear this announcement. He rushed home, collected the amount and made the necessary arrangements for the foreign exchange. The following day, happily, he took the flight to Sri Bhaini Sahib and was able to keep his word to the Satguru and fulfil his father's wish.

In one of his discourses, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji blesses the family of Suba Darshan Singh ji and his sons for their devotion and seva to the sangat. The first Hola Mohalla to be sponsored by an individual was by S. Pritam Singh Rehal and Suba Jagtar Singh of England. After this many more such sponsorships followed. Patsha ji said that S. Pritam Singh has set this noble trend.

Satguru ji's charisma was such that the devotees would travel from one end of the world to another to be in his divine presence and seek his blessings.

In 1987, Satguru ji was in London and the Namdhari sangat there conducted several cultural and spiritual programmes.

Suba Satnam Singh and his brothers who were in Kenya heard about these programmes from a relative and decided on the spur of the moment that they wanted the Satguru ji's darshan. Along with their families, they boarded the earliest flight to London. The flight could offer them little vegetarian food. Famished and tired, they reached London only to learn that Satguru ji had left for Leeds, located at a distance of 500 kilometers from London. Acutely disappointed, yet not ready to give up, they decided to follow the Satguru until they had the holy darshan.

They borrowed a van from a friend. It was a goods carriage with no windows and seats but the family was ready for a rough ride. Huddled inside the van, they left London at seven o'clock in the evening and drove to Leeds. When they stopped at a petrol pump, they realised that the van had no engine oil and quickly filled it. They reached Leeds at midnight and had to look for a telephone booth to call the host with whom Satguru ji was staying. They parked the van in front of a residence and saw an African lady walking down the street. She looked at the Namdhari men and pointing to a house, said:

“Are you looking for a house where men who wear clothes like you are residing? It is right here.”

To their utter surprise they had stopped their van right in front of the house where Satguru ji was staying. They entered the house and were overjoyed to see the smiling face of the Satguru who was standing at the top of the stairs welcoming them. His Holiness asked them:

“How many days of holidays have you taken?”

Before the men could answer, their wives who were just behind, stepped into the house. Looking at the women, Satguru ji said: “Oh! You have brought the holidays along with you.”

Everyone laughed heartily.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji guided the Namdhari diaspora through thick and thin. He always showed them the way during difficult times. In the 1960s and early 1970s, many Namdharis heeded the advice of the Satguru ji and migrated to USA, UK, Canada and Australia to save themselves from the Indo phobia attacks in Uganda and other African countries. They left behind properties and homes and had to start life anew. At this juncture, it was the spiritual guidance of the Satguru ji that stood them through the painful uprootment. The Namdhari Sikhs, who were twice exiled, once from India and once from Africa, are now successful professionals and businessmen who keep themselves spiritually and emotionally linked to Sri Bhaini Sahib, their sacred root.

Today, the United Kingdom is home to thousands of Namdhari Sikhs. Southall, Birmingham, East London, Leeds and Leicester have their own gurdwaras, which are centres of Namdhari culture and tradition. Discourses, teaching of Gurmukhi and Gurmat Sangeet are some of the activities conducted at the gurdwaras for the benefit of the community. Many leading Namdhari musicians, Sukhwinder Singh Pinky, Ustad Harbhajan Singh, Ustad Gurdev Singh, Ustad Surjeet Singh, Ustad Harjinder Singh, have made the UK their home and spread the fragrance of Gurmat Sangeet and Indian classical music all over the world.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji visited the UK for the first time in 1961. The small community of Namdharis in England had a big question before them:

“Who would drive Patsha ji around in England and Germany?”

Harbhajan Singh, a Namdhari disciple declared:

“Gurmeet, my nephew, will drive for the Satguru, I will buy a new car for this tour.”

Gurmeet Singh Birdi, a young lad, who was born and brought up in East Africa had migrated from Uganda to England the same year. He lived with his uncle Harbhajan Singh in London.

Gurmeet Singh Birdi, who was not a Namdhari then, knew nothing of Patsha ji. Yet he was excited at the thought of driving a new car. But the hitch was that he was working part time and his employer had to grant him leave. Birdi met Mr Buckley, the director of the company where he worked and sought some days leave. Birdi told his boss:

“Sir, my Pope is coming from India and I have been chosen to drive the car for him. If he approves me to take him around, I need leave.”

Mr Buckley asked Birdi:

“How long do you need to take off from work?”

Birdi replied:

“No idea, Sir.”

Mr. Buckley, the director was so impressed, he granted leave to Birdi and told him:

“Not everyone gets this opportunity to drive for the Pope. You are a lucky person. If you want, you can take my car.”

Thus, for a month, Birdi became the official driver of Patsha ji and drove him through England and Europe. That was the beginning of a beautiful bonding between the Guru and the disciple - a rare opportunity to drive the Satguru, who is actually the guide and director of every one's life. At the end of that month, Birdi's life was totally transformed. He had become a Namdhari. To his surprise, Mr Buckley, his employer, paid him the salary for the entire month he was with the Satguru.

Birdi (who is now settled in USA) recalled two more episodes which highlight the mystic powers of Patsha ji which His Holiness never wanted to speak of.

When Patsha ji was touring Germany, Birdi was driving him from Berlin to Aldenburg via Frankfurt. The fresh water they had filled in Frankfurt had been used up and Birdi informed Patsha ji that they needed fresh water urgently. They were driving on the highway through the night and it was pitch dark. Unperturbed, Patsha ji started giving instructions to him:

“Turn right, turn left, drive straight.”

They were on some country roads and Birdi feared that they would lose their way. But he could not say anything to Patsha ji and followed his instructions. He drove straight and when he could go no further, right in front of him was a fence and Patsha ji spoke the word:

“Paani.”

The headlamp of the car shone on a clear pond of water right in front of them. It was one o’clock in the night. Patsha ji said:

“Beta, go and ask the owner for some water.”

Birdi walked up to the house and knocked on the door. An elderly man came out and Birdi requested him for some fresh water. The man said:

“Young man, take as much as you want.”

Happily, he filled the cans with water. Then Birdi was puzzled. He asked Patsha ji:

“Patsha ji, how do we to get back to the highway? There are no road signs. There are no landmarks and it is pitch dark.”

Patsha ji, the maargadarshak, knew the way. The Satguru guided the young man, gave directions and within a minute, they were on the highway and reached Aldenburg at three o’clock in the morning.

This incident, which happened fifty-five years ago, has become the bed time story at Birdi ji's house and his grandchildren never tire of hearing it.

Another episode is equally intriguing. During the tours, Birdi never wanted to go to a gas station to fill petrol while Patsha ji was sitting in the car. But once on the road, the gas tank became empty. Birdi informed Patsha ji that they had to fill the gas immediately as they had to travel another 60 miles and the car could stop in the middle. But Patsha ji said:

“Beta, keep going. When you reach home, you can fill the gas.”

Birdi trusted Patsha ji's words and just kept driving. He was tense because the car could stop any minute. The car reached the destination, Patsha ji alighted and Birdi started driving towards the gas station. To his great surprise, as the car entered the gas station, it spluttered and stopped.

Birdi says:

“Have faith in the Satguru. It can move mountains for you.”

During those long drives, Patsha ji would sit in the backseat of the car and put his legs on Birdi's back. Often, Birdi ji used to drive the whole night without sleep and yet would be happy and cheerful the next day. Birdi ji asks:

“Who did this? It is the Satguru, the powerhouse of energy who charges one with enthusiasm and love to live.”

In 1976, devotees from UK requested the Satguru to visit them as England was facing a crisis. It had not rained for months together and the country was going through a long spell of drought. Satguru ji heeded the call of the devotees and decided to visit the UK. The TV and papers flashed the news that the Sikh Guru would bring rains to the parched land. According to Pandit Gopal Singh ji, who accompanied the Satguru to London, earlier many saints and holy men had prayed for the rains and failed. Several people, including the Englishmen pleaded with Patsha ji:

“Oh compassionate Satguru ji! Please bless us with rain.”

At first, Patsha ji said:

“Who am I to make the rain fall?”

When the devotees requested him again, he said:

“Alright. Tomorrow in the morning, we will perform ardas. We will offer prayers at the feet of Satguru Ram Singh ji. If Sacha Patsha accepts our prayers, it will rain.”

The following day, on 27th August 1976, at the bhog of Asa di Vaar, Pandit Gopal Singh ji performed ardas at seven o'clock. Within fifteen minutes, it began to drizzle. The skies opened up and it looked as if Lord Varun, the God of Rain, was at Satguru ji's command. It rained for twenty days and put an end to the dreaded drought. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was hailed by the people and the Press as “the rainmaker”.

Satguru ji was held in high esteem in England. During his visits, he met several dignitaries including Prince Charles, Tony Blair, the then Prime Minister of UK and the Rt. Reverend and Rt. Hon. Richard Chartres, Bishop of London.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Tony Blair, the then Prime Minister of UK



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Richard John Carew Chartres, Bishop of London



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji during the European tour.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with Mother Teresa in Nairobi airport



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji at Kentucky Horse Park, USA in 1981



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji in Hamburg, Germany, in 1999

His Holiness was regarded highly by the Bishop who invited him to his residence. The Bishop requested to be blessed with the Guru Mantra, which was given to him by Suba Satnam Singh ji. His Holiness blessed the Bishop with a rosary.

When Satguru ji met Prince Charles, they discussed organic farming in India. The Prince was impressed by Satguru Jagjit Singh's knowledge of the subject. Whenever Satguru ji met world leaders, he would stress on the importance of promoting non-violence and peace. Once, His Holiness sent a message to Mr Tony Blair, the in the following manner:

“We know that sometimes it is hard to avoid wars but when you make decisions, take care and be mindful that innocent people do not suffer or lose their lives.”

Satguru ji encouraged the sangat at UK to hold a Hola Mohalla in Birmingham in 1984. In 1997, he was honoured in UK's Parliament House.

After undergoing the bypass surgery in Australia in 1991, Satguru ji paid a visit to UK. He stayed there for a couple of days and in one of his lectures, thanked all the devotees who prayed sincerely for his health and well-being. Many devotees had

some doubts in their mind as to why the Satguru had to suffer and undergo such a major surgery. Was it not possible for His Holiness to avoid it?

Satguru ji put to rest their doubts with the following words:

“When you love God, whatever He gives, you should happily accept it.”

He illustrated it with a few examples from the Gurbani:

ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਦੇਵਨਹਾਰੁ ॥

Dukh sukh parabh devanhaar.

God is the Giver of pain and pleasure.

ਅਵਰ ਤਿਆਗਿ ਤੂ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਚਿਤਾਰੁ ॥

Avar tiag tu tiseh chitaar.

Abandon others thoughts, and think of Him alone.

In other verse from Gurbani

ਸੁਖਿ ਅਰਾਧਨੁ ਦੁਖਿ ਅਰਾਧਨੁ ਬਿਸਰੈ ਨ ਕਾਹੂ ਬੇਰਾ ॥

Sukh aradhan dukh aradhan bisrai na kahu bera.

In good times worship and adore Him, in bad times worship and adore Him; do not ever forget Him.

“This is how Satguru ji taught his devotees to accept the will of God,” says Sulakhan Singh ji, Secretary, Namdhari Sikh Sangat, UK.

With the blessings of the Satguru, the Namdhari Sikh diaspora is growing in numbers in the USA. In the 1970s, there were a handful of families. Now, after four decades, there are over three hundred families settled in the USA.

In cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, there are Namdhari centres of worship. In Canada, some Namdhari families live in Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Winnipeg. In Australia too, there is a Namdhari presence with families in Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. In the Middle East, Namdharis live in Dubai and Muscat and are successful businessmen. Subas

of respective centres take care of the spiritual and cultural well being of the community.

The Namdhari diaspora maintains its umbilical connection with Sri Bhaini Sahib and the younger generation takes pride in their identity as Namdhari Sikhs. The role played by the Satguru in guiding the diaspora on the path of righteousness is remarkable. Satguru Uday Singh ji, the present Namdhari spiritual head, is dedicated to continuing this noble work initiated by the earlier Satgurus.

The devotion, dedication and achievements of the Namdhari diaspora, has made the sangat proud. Namdhari Sikhs living abroad keep the flame of devotion burning in their hearts. They may be physically distanced from their roots but Sri Bhaini Sahib and the Satguru keep them moored to their spiritual heritage and motherland. Just as the honey bees seek the sweetness of the flowers, the Namdhari diaspora seeks the holy feet of the Satguru and the bliss of Sri Bhaini Sahib.

ਉਤਰਿ ਦਖਿਣਹਿ ਪੁਬਿ ਅਰੁ ਪਸਮਿ ਜੈ ਜੈ ਕਾਰੁ ਜਪੰਤਿ ਨਰਾ॥

Utar dakhnahi pub ar pascham jai jai kar japanth nara.

In the north, south, east and west, people proclaim Your Victory.



8 CHAPTER



The Conqueror of Hearts

ਨਦੀਆ ਅਤੈ ਵਾਹ ਪਵਹਿ ਸਮੁੰਦਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੀਅਹਿ॥

Nadia atai vah pavahi samund na janiahi.

**The streams and rivers flowing into the ocean
do not know its vastness.**

I

Hailed as avatarpurush by his devotees, Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's life is a saga of exemplary truth and beauty. He was an ocean of compassion, love and mercy. He lived his life according to the teachings of the Gurbani. To this pure blemishless soul, surrender to the Satguru and service to humanity constituted the ultimate values of life.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's words and actions were an expression of the divinity in him. They provided happiness and joy to those who were fortunate to be drawn within that divine aura.

A very special photograph adorns the wall of Baag wali Kothi, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's residence at Sri Bhaini Sahib. Satguru ji, who is seated in the car, bends forward to caress the chin of Ustad Vilayat Khan, the acclaimed sitar artiste. There is a beautiful story of love and devotion behind this photograph. Patsha ji had visited Ustad Vilayat Khan's house in Baltimore, U.S.A. When he was about to leave, Ustad's son paid his respects to Patsha ji, who touched his chin as a token of affection. The Ustad, who was watching this scene, complained:

“Patsha ji, is there no love left in you for me because I have grown old? Why do you discriminate between me and my son?”

The gesture of affection captured in the photograph is the compensation Patsha ji paid to the complaining Ustad.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji blessing Ustad Vilayat Khan

This incident captures the yearning of the human soul to be in touch with the divine. The peacocks and cows of Sri Bhaini Sahib, children, men and women, irrespective of caste and creed, all wanted to love and be loved by Patsha ji. They were drawn by his compassionate eyes and beautiful smile. They longed to have a glimpse of their Satguru. A smile thrown in their direction transported them to bliss. How does one explain this attraction?

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the Paramahansa, possessed a Godlike charisma. He could make every life, which came in contact with him, happy and left that jeeva yearning for more and more of that bliss.

After Satguru ji merged with the eternal light, the peacocks of Sri Bhaini Sahib knocked on his door, looking for him to come out and feed them. Monkeys in the wilds of Maasai Mara touched his feet to be blessed. His was love which extended beyond the bounds of the body. He could touch one's soul. This was possible to Patsha ji because he was divine and he saw divinity everywhere. He truly realized the truth of the statement - Sarvam Brahmamayam. To love and serve others was natural and spontaneous to him. It was his way to be with God.

An episode during Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's youth illustrates this truth. In 1936, when Patsha ji was sixteen years old, one day he wished to go to Neelo Naher Dera, located about ten kilometers from Sri Bhaini Sahib. Patsha ji got into the horse-drawn carriage and started the journey. Gurbaksh Singh, the coachman, was a skilled driver and the horse ran fast and covered the distance in no time.

After spending a couple of hours in the cool environs of the canal, swimming and meditating, it was time to return to Sri Bhaini Sahib. Patsha ji joyfully started the journey back home. After a while, suddenly the horse stopped in the middle of the road as if on a protest.

The coachman coaxed and cajoled the horse to continue the journey. But the horse would not heed his orders or pleadings. A good fifteen minutes elapsed this way. Gurbaksh Singh lost patience and took the whip to teach the horse a lesson.

Patsha ji stopped him and said:

“Gurbaksh, do not beat the horse. Leave him alone.”

The coachman said:

“Baba ji, already fifteen minutes have passed. It is meal time. We are hungry and have to reach home. ”

Patsha ji replied:

“Gurbaksh, the horse is hungry too, he also knows that he has to take us home.”

After half an hour, the horse was still resting on the road, unmindful of the confusion it had created. The coachman took the whip again and sought Patsha ji’s permission to beat the horse. Patsha ji spoke in a firm voice to the coachman:

“Gurbaksh, put down the whip, take your rosary and perform naam simran.”

After a short while, the horse got up on its own and carried its precious load to Sri Bhaini Sahib.

This episode explains Patsha ji’s philosophy of life which is to give unconditional love to all living beings. He would not use violence or force to correct anyone. He would not cause pain to any living creature.

When this incident took place, Patsha ji was sixteen, an age when most of us are impulsive and impatient. But Patsha ji, like a loving mother, exercised a lot of patience in handling both the stubborn horse and the coachman. Patsha ji did not let the coachman beat the animal and empathised with the tired horse, which could also have had its mood swings. Patsha ji attributed intelligence to the animal when he said that the horse knew its responsibility of having to carry the Master home.

Patsha ji, a true apostle of peace and non-violence, was first a votary of love. It is this quality which endowed him with the heart of a mother.

His Holiness would tell children who had no parents:

“Child, if someone asks you who your father is, tell them that Patsha ji is your father. If someone asks you who your mother is, tell them that Mata Chand Kaur ji is your mother.”

Patsha ji showered divine and parental love on all who came in touch with him. This is an attribute of God. No wonder Ustad Vilayat Khan said:

“If there is God in human form, I see it in Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. May God make others also see the divinity in him.”

II

Being compassionate and generous was second nature to Patsha ji. His heart went out to the sufferings of the poor and his hands were ever ready to wipe their tears. He was a philanthropist whose generosity could be compared to the munificence of Karna of Mahabharata, who gave away his armour in the battlefield to a poor Brahmin who was in need of money to perform his son's brahmopadesha. To give for a good cause and make others happy was Karna's dharma. Patsha ji's philosophy of life too was the same. Charity and seva gave him immense fulfilment. Patsha ji would give away happily whatever he possessed. If someone approached him for help, he would spontaneously stretch his abhaya hastha.

On one occasion when Patsha ji was giving darshan to the devotees at Sri Bhaini Sahib, a poor man approached him with a request. The man had lost his home and crops due to heavy rains and needed a few lakhs of rupees to rebuild his shattered life. Patsha ji was moved by his abject condition and asked his sevak, Mohinder Singh Purba, if there was adequate cash to help the man. The aide said that they had to arrange for the amount and asked the man to come later.

The poor man was disappointed as he had pinned his hopes on Patsha ji's support. Patsha ji too felt very sad that he could not help him at that moment. Just as the man left, a devotee came with a briefcase, placed it in front of Satguru ji and said:

“Patsha ji, this is the daswand due to the Satguru.”

Satguru ji’s face lit up, he turned to the aide and said:

“Call that man, quickly.”

When the man came back, Satguru ji handed over the briefcase to him and said:

“Use this money to build your home.”

Patsha ji did not even count the money. The briefcase had enough cash to fulfil the need of the poor man.

Satguru ji told the person who had brought the money:

“You helped me to uphold my dharma, may God bless you.”

Patsha ji’s devotees recall such innumerable instances of spontaneous generosity of the Satguru.

One day, while reading the newspaper, Patsha ji was drawn to a particular story. There was a write-up on a poor peasant cultivating high quality vegetables in Malerkotla. Patsha ji was impressed with his hard work and skill and invited him to Sri Bhaini Sahib. His Holiness told him:

“We are happy with your work, how can we help you?”

The farmer replied:

“Patsha ji, I cultivate vegetables on someone else’s land. I wish I could have land of my own.”

Without thinking twice, Patsha ji bought a piece of fertile land in his village and helped the man become independent. The farmer was a Muslim. Patsha ji’s generosity knew no boundaries of region, religion or caste.

Once, Patsha ji had an appointment with Mrs. Indira Gandhi in Delhi. At her office, he saw an old man waiting to meet the Prime Minister and struggling to get an audience with her. Patsha ji asked the senior citizen what his problem was. The man replied that he was a freedom fighter but had not received any pension from the government. Patsha ji assured him that he would send him a monthly pension from Sri Bhaini Sahib. The old man started receiving the pension from Patsha ji.

After a couple of years, the man asked Satguru ji for a hike because the government had increased the allowance to other pensioners. Patsha ji conceded to his request and granted the hike!

Patsha ji was a great patron of music and musicians. He played the role of a parent in cases of young, talented musicians. Along with grooming their talents, he took great care to see that they were well-settled in life so that they could completely dedicate themselves in the service of this fine art. Disciples such as Raagi Balwant Singh, Kirpal Singh and Harjinder Singh entered wedlock through Patsha ji's initiative and blessings.

Balwant Singh ji recalls the way in which Patsha ji shaped his life.

“After my first stage performance in Ludhiana, Patsha ji was eagerly waiting for my return. As I entered his residence, he embraced me and said, “I heard that you played very well.”

Then came the surprise. Patsha ji announced:

“Balwant, tomorrow you are getting married.”

Totally taken aback, Balwant Singh, who was seventeen years old, stammered:

“But Patsha ji, how can that be? I have not informed my parents. Further, I am so young.”

Patsha ji reassured him:

“Do not worry, I will take care of all that.”

Balwant continued:

“But Patsha ji, I do not have clothes to wear for the wedding.”

Patsha ji said:

“Balwant, you can wear my new clothes.”

With nothing more to say, Balwant Singh, the bridegroom, stayed at Satguru’s residence.

Next morning at the Asa di Vaar, Balwant Singh, the bridegroom, did not even know who the girl he was going to get married to. When the bride came and sat next to him, he realised that it was Harmeet, the girl who was learning music with him.

After the wedding, the newlyweds were driven in the Guru’s Rolls Royce to their new home. As per the wish of Patsha ji, a new house had been built, furnished and gifted to the musician and his bride. Patsha ji had kept this a secret. He did more than a parent does for a child of his own.

Patsha ji arranged and performed countless such marriages and all of them are successful. The community strongly believes that a marriage blessed by the Satguru turns out to be a happy one.

Patsha ji was concerned that poverty should not prevent anyone from acquiring good education. Satguru Jagjit Singh’s heart went out to poor students who struggled hard to come up in life. Buta Singh ji, now a successful Namdhari businessman, narrated the way in which Satguru ji helped him and his mother when they had no one in this world to support and take care of them.

Buta Singh lost his father when he was very young and the mother had nowhere to go. She met Satguru Jagjit Singh ji and explained her hapless situation. Satguru ji gave her shelter at Sri Jiwan Nagar and Buta Singh started schooling there. His entire education was funded by Satguru ji.

When he was studying for Pre University Course in Sirsa, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji asked the youngster:

“Do you get enough money for your expenses?” The boy replied:

“Patsha ji, sometimes it is difficult.”

Patsha ji whispered into his ears:

“Listen carefully, youngster. Don’t tell this to anyone. Whenever you need money, write a postcard to me with these words on it: Mera kaam kar dijiye” (a gentle reminder for help).

Buta Singh began to send postcards with the message to Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. Every month, he received a money order for Rs. 300/- from the Satguru, which was a big sum then and was adequate to meet his expenses.

After seven months, when Patsha ji happened to see Buta Singh, he asked him:

“Beta, why have you stopped sending me the postcards? How is your studies going on?”

Buta Singh replied:

“Patsha ji, with your blessings, I have started a small business, which takes care of my expenses. So I do not write to you for money.”

Patsha ji’s concern did not stop with sending money to the student. He saw to it that he was on the right track and took his studies seriously.

Patsha ji's attitude to money and material possessions was one of dispassionate detachment. He lived by the words of the Gurbani that wealth should be put to the service of God and Man. Distributing food, clothes, land and houses to the needy gave him immense happiness.

In one of his discourses, Patsha ji states how money and family bonds trap us in maya:

“When we visit Western countries, we find that although people migrate there for better prospects and happiness, they are frustrated and discontented. What could be the reason for this? It is their search for happiness in materialism...the Gurbani tells us:

“Children, spouse and wealth, who has ever obtained eternal peace from these?”
(Source: Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji Discourses, Page 123)

Speaking about the munificence of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the present Namdhari spiritual head, Satguru Uday Singh ji, says:

“Patsha ji truly lived like a king. In the morning if he had a million rupees with him, by the end of the day he would have spent it all on some good cause and would be the happiest person in the world.”

When Patsha ji travelled abroad, he would often invite his friends to accompany him. Pritam Singh Kavi ji, one of his childhood friends, had the privilege of travelling with Patsha ji to many countries. During one of the trips, Kavi ji, who was working in Navaa Zamana, a publishing house, had to apply for leave without pay for a month in order to join Patsha ji. But his financial position was not good enough to bear this burden. A thought came to his mind:

“I wish Patsha ji understands my position and helps me.”

When he thought so, immediately Patsha ji turned towards Kavi ji and said:

“I wish to give you two months salary for the period you have been with me. Is it enough?”

Kavi ji was moved by this gesture and said:

“You throw money like a winnow. How can you do that?”

Patsha ji replied:

“Money is maya, it is given by God and should be spent in His service.”

“One can count the stars in the skies but not the people who have benefited by the magnanimity of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji,” say his followers.

III

Disciples worshipped Satguru Jagjit Singh ji as God in human form. In times of distress, they offered prayers to him and were very sure that the Satguru would apply balm on the wounds of life and heal them. Disciples attribute many miracles to this spiritual master, who strengthened their mind and showed them the way to God. With his grace, they could face the tribulations of life and bring meaning into their existence.

This compassionate master healed the sick, saved many from death, brought peace and happiness to broken homes, and freed the young children from evil ways.

The story of Gurdev Kaur, the daughter of Ustad Natha Singh, a close disciple of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, illustrates the spiritual power of the master, who could save his devotees from the clutches of death.

Gurdev Kaur was unhappy as her marriage was full of discord. When it became unbearable for her, she decided to end her life. Even though she knew it was wrong, she attempted suicide and took poison. When her father learnt about it, he rushed to her house. By then, Gurdev Kaur's pulse had gone down to zero and she was on the threshold of death. It looked as if she would not survive.

A large number of people had gathered at Gurdev Kaur's house. Ustad Natha Singh sent out everyone from the room, closed the door, sat on the floor near his daughter. He knew that at this juncture only Satguru ji could save his daughter. He put her head on his lap and prayed with great devotion to the Satguru. He said:

“Patsha ji, you are our saviour. Please bless her, retrieve her from death.”

After a few minutes, Gurdev Kaur opened her eyes and looked at her father. Relieved and joyous, Natha Singh asked:

“Beti, what happened?”

Gurdev Kaur said:

“Pita ji, my soul came out of my body and it had to walk over a narrow bridge and reach the other side of the river. When I reached the middle of the bridge, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji who was standing at the other end told me, ‘Turn and go back.’ I was very scared. I did not know how to turn back.

Satguru ji said, ‘Look at me. Sit like me. And turn back.’

I did exactly as His Holiness told me and my soul returned to my body. I opened my eyes and I could see you, father.”

Ustad Natha Singh shed tears of joy and offered prayers of gratitude to the Satguru for bringing back his daughter from death.

Another miracle illustrates how Satguru Jagjit Singh ji brought peace and harmony into the life of another devotee. Sulakhan Singh, a Namdhari expatriate based in the UK, recalls that when Satguru ji visited England, one day a young mother with her disabled child approached His Holiness with a request. She was in great pain as her husband had deserted her and gone away to another country. She could not bear the burden of raising the disabled child all by herself and prayed to Satguru ji to help her out of the situation.

Patsha ji advised her to offer special prayers for fifteen days and assured her that all would be well.

Meanwhile, the woman's husband who was living in a foreign country was planning to marry another woman. Just before the wedding day, the bride-to-be asked the man:

“I wish to know if you are already married.”

The man was surprised and admitted that he had a family in the UK.

He asked the woman:

“How did you come to know that I was already married? Who told you?”

She replied:

“An old man with flowing white beard came in my dream and revealed your past to me. I cannot marry you. You must go back to your family and take care of them.”

The man repented, went back to the U.K and rejoined his family. This happened exactly at the end of the fifteen-day prayer offered by the wife who had sought Satguru ji's guidance.

It is mysterious how Satguru ji could appear in the dream of a woman who had never seen him and help her to perceive the truth. Thus he paved the way for the devotee's broken family to reunite.

Thousands of disciples have experienced the miraculous healing powers of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji in their lives.

Harbhajan Singh Saluja, an ardent disciple of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, is one such fortunate person. He developed an acute back ache and the ailment was diagnosed

as bone cancer. Doctors advised him to undergo bone marrow transplant, which involves major surgery. With complete faith in the Satguru ji, Saluja ji underwent the operation. After the procedure, he had excruciating pain in the spine. Sometime later, when Saluja ji visited Satguru ji, His Holiness told him:

“Harbhajan, I want to embrace you.”

Saluja ji replied:

“Andhe ko kya chahiye? Do aankhen.” What does a blind man need? Only two eyes.”

Patsha ji embraced Saluja ji and kept his hand on the spot where it hurt most. After this, there was great relief and steadily, Saluja ji’s health improved due to the blessings of the Satguru ji.

Saluja ji says:

“The doctor is only a bahana, an excuse. The real healer is the Satguru and his kirpa is more important than the treatment itself.”

Preetam Kaur, wife of Jai Singh, grandson of Patsha ji, believes that Satguru ji heeds the prayers of those who surrender at his feet. A few years ago, her father suffered from high fever and was admitted to a hospital. When the fever did not subside, a string of blood tests was conducted. To their utter dismay, the doctors informed the family that Preetam Kaur’s father was suffering from cancer and it was worrisome. Shattered by this news, Preetam Kaur prayed to Patsha ji:

“Oh Satguru ji, I consider you as God. Please save my father.”

Within a couple of days, before starting treatment, the patient was subjected to another set of tests. To everyone’s joy, the results showed that it was not cancer.

Patsha ji's healing powers and words brought solace to innumerable devotees who often started praising and singing his glory. But Patsha ji never encouraged flattery. He knew the ways of the world and attributed all these miracles to the Almighty and the power of Ardas.

When someone wrote a poem in Patsha ji's praise, he did not allow the devotee to read it in his presence. Karan Pal, a disciple of Patsha ji, recalls how a gentleman eulogised Satguru ji in a public meeting. After his speech, Patsha ji said:

“The previous speaker sang my praises. I wish to be like that.”

Often, Patsha ji hid his spiritual powers from the eyes of the world. An incident which one of his former security men narrated reveals this side of his personality.

Once, Patsha ji was travelling from Madhya Pradesh to Namdhari Farms, Bidadi, by car. When they were some distance from Bidadi, Patsha ji suddenly asked the driver to take a detour, which was a longer route. The driver suggested that it was late in the evening and it was not safe to travel by the unfamiliar route. But Patsha ji insisted on taking the longer route.

As they drove through the jungles, suddenly a figure of a sadhu with a long beard appeared on the road. He waved the car to stop. Patsha ji got out of the car and had a cordial conversation with the sadhu for some time, while the others waited. The sadhu told him:

“Satguru ji, I have been waiting for you in this jungle for twenty years eating fruits and leaves. I am happy you have come. You could not have gone without meeting me.”

After that, when they continued their journey, Patsha ji told his aides:

“If we had taken the familiar route, I would not have met the sadhu.”

Such inexplicable mystic experiences abound in his life.

IV

Patsha ji was an incarnation of humility and simplicity. He loved to guide and serve the sangat and keep them happy.

In 1988, a jap paryog was held in Sri Bhaini Sahib. Thousands of Namdharis from all over the world attended this spiritual practice. At the conclusion of the month-long meditation, the bhog ceremony was held in Partap Mandir.

At the function, there was an announcement that Satguru ji would address the gathering. The devotees fell silent waiting to hear the divine message.

A few minutes elapsed but Satguru ji, seated on the dais, remained quiet and did not utter a word. He was emotional and his eyes were moist. Satguru ji got up and went to the adjoining room. Everyone was puzzled and no one could understand what was happening.

After fifteen minutes, the personal assistant of Satguru ji came out from the room and started reading a written message from His Holiness. The aide could not continue reading as he was choked with emotion. Another devotee completed reading the message.

The message said:

I am thankful to all of you who took part in this jap paryog. I was unable to serve you in a proper manner, so please forgive me. Please forgive my shortcomings in serving you during your entire stay in Sri Bhaini Sahib, please come again.

These words of the Satguru left the devotees stunned. It was they who always waited for the call of the Satguru ji, the spiritual master, who showed them the way by example. His Holiness took time out of his busy schedule to lead the prayers and provided the best hospitality with love and affection. And yet, His Holiness felt that he had not done enough for the sangat.

As a devotee says:

“He gave us place to stay, provided free food and facilities, an environment to meditate, offered guidance for spiritual practices and still felt that he had not done enough. This is true humility.”

Patsha ji, himself an embodiment of knowledge, would readily acknowledge and respect scholars. At a conference he found himself surrounded by writers and intellectuals. Patsha ji said:

“I do not possess any educational qualifications. However, you are all aware that when a large piece of land is irrigated, a small patch of land in its surroundings also gets moist through water seepage. Similarly, many intellectuals and highly educated people surround me today, therefore I am also able to share a few words of wisdom.” (Source: Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji: Discourses, Page 123)

Patsha ji’s humility brought tears to the eyes of many who were assembled in the hall. People were moved by Patsha ji’s spirit of seva and simplicity.

On several occasions in Sri Bhaini Sahib, in the early mornings, Patsha ji would walk up to the well from his kothi and draw water from the well. He would personally pour water on the tired pilgrims wanting to bathe. He would do this seva incognito by covering his face, so that the pilgrims would not recognise him and feel embarrassed.

Patsha ji would hide his identity and sweep the floors of Sri Bhaini Sahib at night. When there was a need for volunteers, he would show the way by cleaning the pulses and washing the used plates and utensils in the langar. Patsha ji repeatedly told the devotees that seva wipes away the ego, which leads to the total surrender at the feet of the Guru and God.

Dignity of labour was an innate quality in Satguru Jagjit Singh ji. Many photographs capture the karmoyogi in action - standing knee-deep in slush and digging the ground, making roads, working on farms, milking the cows and distributing food.



Even though a fleet of cars was at his disposal, when necessary, Patsha ji did not hesitate to ride on a cycle rickshaw. On one occasion, when Patsha ji travelled by train to Lucknow, the people who were to receive him had not yet arrived at the station. His Holiness told his aide to hire a cycle rickshaw. Surrounded by luggage and the aide seated at the foot, he royally rode through the streets of Lucknow. Such was the simplicity of the noble soul.

Patsha ji valued truth and sincerity and considered them as the most important qualities a person should possess. He was very truthful and there was no difference between his words and action.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji performing seva



In 1961, Patsha ji visited Japan to attend the World Religion Conference. During that visit, he participated in a religious discourse at the University of Tokyo. There were many scholars from all over the world who presented their views on comparative religions. The students posed a question to the scholars gathered there:

“What is the religion that is common to all?”

The scholars tried to answer through examples from scriptures but the students were not satisfied. When it was the turn of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji to speak, he said:

“Boliye sach dharma jhooth na boliye” ...“Always speak the truth, that is religion. Do not tell lies.”

He further added:

“Being truthful is the common goal of all religions, even atheists can adopt this. If all of us follow this religion, peace would reign supreme in the world.”

The students were happy with this answer.

Patsha ji always spoke the truth and so his words gained the power of truth. Many devotees felt that the words of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji came true. They believed in the miraculous powers of the words spoken by the Satguru. But Patsha ji attributed it to the power of God, Akal Purakh. When people were healed by Patsha ji's touch or words, he never claimed any credit for himself. The Satguru always said mysterious are the ways of God, who knows what is best for His children and we should accept His will unquestioningly. Patsha ji would tell the sangat:

“Do not waste your time in slander and gossip. Instead talk about the miracles of God.”

He once told his friends:

“Even if I am alone and no one can hear me, I cannot bring myself to utter bad words or curses.”

How could the tongue, soaked in the sweetness of the naam and shabad, pollute itself ?

Patsha ji’s cheerful nature brought joy to all. He would carry dry fruits or sweets in his pocket and distribute them to small children. When he met the youth, a friendly pat on the cheek or back made them feel very happy. Whenever he visited the old age home, he would sit on the charpoy in the sun and indulge in a friendly chat with the inmates. When seniors approached His Holiness for paada sparsha, Satguru ji would often lift his foot up for the aged to offer pranams. This may seem unconventional but the kind-hearted Patsha ji knew that it was difficult for the seniors to bend and touch his feet.

Satguru ji was the sun who could radiate light and happiness around him. His childhood friends recalled that during their school days, whenever the young Patsha ji entered the classroom or playground, there would be happiness and gaiety all around. His very presence made them feel blessed. At the end of the day, when he left for home, they experienced an inexplicable sadness.

Truly, this is the quality of an avatar purush to whom all living beings get drawn.

Patsha ji was fond of giving handfuls of boondi, jilebi, laddu and burfi as parsad to the people. Once, while distributing boondi, someone suggested to Patsha ji to dole out less so that there would be enough for all. Patsha ji, with a sense of humour, picked a grain of boondi and asked him:

“Is it enough?”

To everyone’s amusement, Patsha ji would often hand over an extra jilebi or burfi to the tall and hefty among the devotees.

One of his aides narrates how Patsha ji used to walk so swiftly that it was difficult for others to match his pace. When the aide requested Patsha ji to slow down,

Patsha ji took very small steps and walked at a snail's pace and the aide did not know how to follow him.

On another occasion, there was a discussion on learning music. Patsha ji said that only those who are dedicated and surrender themselves totally at the feet of the Guru can master this fine art.

He added that those who gave away pearls in charity in the previous birth would become great musicians. Then someone asked him:

“I cannot even appreciate music, what would I have given in charity?”

Patsha replied in a lighter vein:

“You must have given away donkeys.”

Once a masseur from Thailand was serving Patsha ji. He used a lot of force while massaging. Patsha ji endured the pain and did not express any emotion. At the end of the session, purplecoloured bruise marks appeared on his body because of the excessive force applied by the masseur. The masseur asked Patsha ji:

“Was it painful?”

Patsha ji answered with a smile:

“It was. After all, it is a human body.”

IV

From childhood, Patsha ji lived by a set of values and discipline was foremost among them. All his life His Holiness strictly followed the maryada prescribed by Satguru Ram Singh ji. Even while travelling or abroad he would not relax the rules of conduct. Patsha ji would always use well water or fresh running water for cooking and drinking and kept the sodh. If necessary, in alien lands, he would not

hesitate to make his disciples drive throughout the night to locate fresh running water, which Namdharis use for drinking and cooking as part of their maryada.

His Holiness said it is important to purify one's body, speech and mind if one has to realise the presence of God in one's life. Patsha ji attached great significance to silence. He advised the sangat to practise complete silence at least once a week and on Thursdays, he himself observed silence.

Satguru ji asked his disciples to speak less, eat less and sleep less as these are the steps which pave the way for fruitful sadhana. Patsha ji's words had great impact on his followers because he was a spiritual master who practised what he preached. His Holiness took a single meal a day for most of his life. After a major stroke, when doctors advised him to take a second meal, he reluctantly agreed to do so. Sattvic food such as a bowl of curds, sweetened lassi, fruits and vegetables, made up his meal. There was hardly any spice in his food. Whenever he visited the homes of the disciples he instructed them to provide simple vegetarian meals for everyone.

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji lived by the directions prescribed in the following verse which he used to quote:

ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲਾਪ ਸੀ ਨਿੰਦ੍ਰਾ ਦਯਾ ਛਿਮਾ ਤਨ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ॥

Alapa Ahaar Sulaapa See Nindaraa Dayaa Chhimaa Tana Pareeti

Eat less and sleep little, generate compassion and forbearance in your heart

ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਬਾਹਿਬੋ ਹ੍ਵੈਬੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਗੁਣ ਅਤੀਤਿ ॥

Seel Saantokh Sadaa Nirabaahibo Havaibo Tarigun Ateeti

Profess pure conduct and patience always.

Patsha ji's austere style of living could be seen in the hard bamboo or wooden cot on which he slept in an 8x12 feet room. A thin cotton mattress with white sheets constituted his bed. The bed was so narrow that he could turn on it with great difficulty.

Patsha ji slept for a few hours and yet remained active and cheerful the whole day. Visiting the sangat all over the world, meeting people, attending conferences on

peace, vegetarianism and other socially beneficial activities, he had little time to himself. He could integrate such a rigorous schedule of public life with long hours of music sessions, meditation and prayer.

Patsha ji practised and preached the importance of naam simran. He was constantly praying, working or pouring forth his soul into music. During jap paryogs which had to start at two in the morning, Patsha ji would get up at one o'clock, wash his body from head to toe and sit for long, uninterrupted, meditation. Even during the bitterest winters, he would not compromise on this discipline. When someone told him:

“Please, Patsha ji, don't be so strict with your maryada, no aide will remain with you.”

Patsha ji replied:

“I am fully prepared to carry my own ghadva,” meaning that at no cost would he give up the code of conduct prescribed by his religion.

When Patsha ji was to be operated upon for a heart ailment, he told the doctors:

“Please try to avoid blood transfusion. Do not use alcoholbased medicines. Do not remove the five “K”s from me. Do not cut the hair and please ensure that no female nurse serves me.”

When someone said that this code of conduct could lead to his death, he brushed aside the thought:

“After all, this is a human body, which has to go one day. I prefer to hold on to the maryada prescribed by my Satguru than live by transgressing it.”

It is this kind of discipline which made his followers admire and emulate him. Many of his aides and disciples recall fondly how Patsha ji would call them early in the morning to find out if they had woken up. If not, repeated calls would wake them up. He was indeed a Satguru who awakened the body, mind and the soul of his disciples.

Every small act of His Holiness had a deep value attached to it. Once, in February 1980, Patsha ji set out with his entourage on a tour of North India by train. He travelled by a special coach which had beautiful furniture, carpeted floors among

other facilities. When they boarded the train, one of the aides placed a suitcase full of woollen clothes on a table. Patsha ji was disturbed by this and politely told him:

“This coach is very neat. The tables and chairs are beautiful. Please do not place the luggage on the table.”

The man replied:

“Patsha ji, I do not want our suitcase to get damaged.”

Satguru ji said:

“Look, we can buy a new suitcase if it is damaged. But if the table breaks, who knows when it will be replaced by the Railways? We should not damage others property to save our belongings. It is a moral obligation to leave the coach neater and cleaner than the way we found it.”

This kind of discipline embraced all aspects of Patsha ji’s life.

All his life, Satguru ji kept a strict and active daily schedule. He would get up in the morning, take his bath, attend the Asa di Vaar, have breakfast, read the Gurbani and rest for a while. He wished to be updated about the news and would ask someone to read the newspaper to him.

The headlines from Punjabi Kesari, Jagbani, Ajit and Tribune would be read out and if a news item captured Satguru Jagjit Singh ji’s interest, he would put on the glasses and read it himself. Mahaan Kosh, written by Kahan Singh Nabha, was Patsha ji’s constant companion. He used it mostly to look up the meanings of archaic words in the Gurbani. The aides would make it a point to carry the dictionary wherever they went because they would not know when Patsha ji would ask them to look for the meaning of a word.

Satguru ji took tasks very seriously. People used to gift him books and Patsha ji wanted them to be read. Gurmukh Singh advocate, a young devotee who served him during this phase, said Patsha ji sent him a book written in English on sitar, the Indian musical instrument. Gurmukh Singh forgot about it and after a couple of days when Patsha ji met him, he asked the young man:

“Gurmukh, have you read that book? What does the author say?”

Punctuality was a hallmark of Patsha ji's personality. Satguru ji valued his and other people's time. He would be on the dot for any appointment. On many occasions, at Sri Bhaini Sahib, Patsha ji would start walking towards the venue to attend a programme if the aides were not ready. He hated to keep people waiting for him. One of his aides was a friendly soul who loved a good chat. If Patsha ji sent him on some work, he would not be back on time. Patsha ji would send another aide in a car to fetch him so that his daily schedule would not be affected.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was the picture of austerity and simplicity. His clothes would be sparkling white without a crease. If he found his clothes lying around in his room, he would himself fold them. He always carried a rosary, a handkerchief, a clock and a small bottle of water in his pocket. He would clean his fingers with water if he touched anything unclean. He inspired people around him to be clean and neat. Whenever young boys came with their hair untied after a bath, he would ask them gently:

“Don't you have a hairdryer? Dry your hair and tie a turban.”

VI

Patsha ji's amiable nature endeared him to all. His face was lit with an enchanting smile which attracted young and old alike. His Holiness always remained peaceful and calm. He would never get angry with anyone. He inherited this trait from his dear mother Mata Bhupinder Kaur ji, who was very soft spoken and affectionate. Mahant Kesar Singh ji, who brought up Patsha ji as a child, was an epitome of virtues. His tolerance and compassion made a deep impact on Patsha ji's personality.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji had the gift of making others feel that they were very special to him. He would remember the names of all devotees and address each of them by their name.

Patsha ji's openness and acceptance of people irrespective of their caste, ideology and creed made him great. Swaran Singh Virk, the contemporary Namdhari historian, recalls his bonding with Satguru Jagjit Singh ji.

Virk ji's father, Gurmukh Singh Jhabbar, was the caretaker of Patsha ji when His Holiness was a child. Virk ji, who grew up in Sri Bhaini Sahib, embraced the

Communist ideology when he was a youth and became a full time worker of the Communist Party. He kept himself away from Patsha ji, fearing that his Communist ideology may be unacceptable to the Satguru ji. But one day in 1993, Patsha ji sent word to Virk ji to meet him. Virk ji heeded the words of the Satguru.

Patsha ji spoke to Swaran Singh Virk:

“Swaran, so what if you are a Communist? You are our son. Our child. You can remain a Communist and come to your Satguru’s house.”

Since then, Virk ji re-established his umbilical connection with Sri Bhaini Sahib. Today, he is actively involved in research on Namdhari history and Kuka Movement. Sri Amar Bharti, the Namdhari scholar, says:

“Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was so open-minded that he could accept people with their beliefs. It was his greatness.”

One may wonder what is common to a Communist and a Namdhari Guru. Virk ji answers with conviction:

“Both wish to build a world free of exploitation.”

It is this keen desire to create a world free of poverty and injustice, which is the foundation of Namdhari Sant Khalsa and all the Satgurus work towards realizing this dream.

Patsha ji loved to be in touch with people and he was a good communicator.

Before the days of Internet and mobile phones, he would pen letters to people close to him. He would never waste a single minute of his time. Even while travelling he would write letters which would be full of warmth, advice and blessings.

In one such letter written in 1984 to Thakur Uday Singh ji, Patsha ji’s love and concern for the welfare of the country and the Namdhari community shows through. The personal touches make the letter endearing:

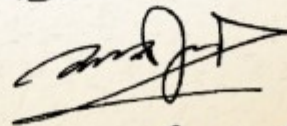
ਸੀਮਤ ਕਾਗਜ਼ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ
ਉਸਾਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਭਿੰਨਾ ਨਾਹ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚੀਕ ਰਹੋ
NFM ਪੁਸ਼ ਕਾਏ 'ਤੇ ਹੋ । ਫਾਹਮ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹੀਨਾ
ਸ਼ੀਬ ਨਾਹਿਅਨ ਨੀਕੁਤ ਮਮਤਾ ਦਿੱਤੁ ਸਾਦ
ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਫਸ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਇਸ ਉੱਤੇ ਚੁਣੇ ਦੀਸ਼ਾਂ
ਫੋਟੋ ਫਰ ਸਮੇਤ ਭੇਜੇ ਥੀਕੇਕੇ ॥

ਦਮਾਦਮ ਫਾਂਸ ਪਸਾਂਟ ਕਰੇਪੋਟੇ ਫੀਰ ਰਹ
ਪਏ ਹੋਣੇ । ਤੇਰੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕਰੇ ਪਤਾ ਲਿਖੇ
ਗਿਣੇ ।

ਇਸ ਭਿੰਨਾਨਕ ਸਮੇਂ ਸੀਟਰ
ਖਾਸਕਰ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਰ ਤੁਸਾਰੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਬਣਿਆ
ਗਿਣ ਦੀ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਹੈ । ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ੧-੧
ਮਾਲਾ ਭਜਨ ੧-੧ ਭੁੱਖੀ ਸਮੇਤ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ
ਸਾਰੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਮਾਨਵਤਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਦੁਤਮ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ
ਤੇ ਵਰਨਾ ਦਿਤ ਕਰਿਆ ਕਰੋ ਕਿ ਗਿਣਿਆ
ਤੇ । ਸਤਨੇ ਮਿਲਕੇ ਗਿਣੇ

ਜੀਵੀ ਕੁਸਰਤ ਤੇ ਤੇਰੇ ਸੰਭਾਵੀ
ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ

੧ ਪੰਨਾ ਸਮ ਤੇ ਦਾ ਕੀਏ
ਤੁਸਾਰੇ ਤਾ ? (ਇਸਨਾਨ ਫੈਰ ਕਰੇ ਲਿਹਾ
ਕਰੇ ਸਕੇਸ਼ ਤੇ ਸਤਨਾ ॥



੧੫ ਮਾਰਚ ੨੦੧੧ ਈ ੧੧ ਵ
FLT No LF 660
DLI BKK
IST ੧੦੦੪

Kaka Uday Singh ji,

Sat Sri Akaal

Hope with the blessing of Satguru ji, you have comfortably reached NFM (Namdhari Farm).

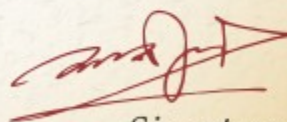
Send photographs of sugarcane, mango, coconut, grapes, guava and sapota plants, along with the fruits, to Bangkok.

The tomatoes that were transplanted must be growing fine.

Further, keep informing me about Hindu-Sikh relations. During these difficult times of communal tension, all of you should perform one maala (rosary) of naam simran and one rosary of Bhagauti. Thereafter, offer ardas to Satguru Partap Singh ji for protection. Everyone should follow this.

Convey my Sat Sri Akaal to Bibi Gursharan and all other members of the sangat.

How is the daily routine of one hour meditation and Asa Di Vaar going on at Namdhari Farms? Please ensure that all disciples take head-to-toe bath.



Signature

*15 Maghar, 2041
9-Nov-84*

*Flight No LF660
Delhi-Bangkok*

IST 10:04 (Indian Standard Time)

Satguru Uday Singh ji recalls:

“In early 1980s when there was no telephone connectivity at Namdhari Farms in Urakahalli, Bidadi, Patsha ji had fixed a particular day and time in the week for us to communicate. We used to go to Bangalore and call Patsha ji, who had instructed us to call him without fail regardless of which part of the world he was in. Patsha ji would enquire about everybody’s welfare, give guidance with regard to work and that magical call would fill us with the necessary energy to work hard.”

To Patsha ji, very often the telephone became a medium of teaching and learning music. He would pick up the phone at any time of the day or night and call his students to discuss music. Once Patsha ji called Balwant Singh in the middle of the night and asked if he knew a particular composition. When Balwant Singh answered in the negative, Patsha ji remembered that Mohan Singh ji knew it. He called the musician and asked him to teach the composition to Balwant Singh. Balwant Singh learnt the piece taught to him over the phone and presented it at the Asa di Vaar the following morning as Patsha ji wished.

Patsha ji complimented Balwant Singh by saying:

“You are better than a computer. You have learnt the composition, copied it in your memory and replayed it beautifully.”

Many a time the telephone linked Patsha ji to the musicians whom he loved and held in great regard. Once Patsha ji was flying to Bangkok and the aeroplane had the facility of making telephone calls. It was midnight. Patsha ji instructed Harpal Singh, his aide, to call Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma, the eminent santoor artiste. Harpal Singh ji suggested that they should call the musician the following morning as it was too late in the night. Patsha ji insisted on speaking to Pandit ji. The call was made and Patsha ji enquired after the health of the musician and blessed him. Such friendly gestures drew people to Satguru ji.

Patsha ji regularly called members of the Namdhari sangat who lived abroad and enquired about the activities and welfare of the disciples. He would ask them:

“What is the time now in your country? Is the sangat performing naam simran and jap regularly?”

Even though Patsha ji was an effective communicator, he used speech sparingly. He could transform people through silence. He practised non-violence in thought, speech and deed. Jai Singh, Satguru ji’s grandson, recalls that Patsha ji would not scold or beat naughty children. One compassionate look from him was enough to reform the child.

Patsha ji’s way of correcting the youth was also exemplary. He used gentle persuasion to influence them to give up their vices, if they had any. He would ask them to stay with him at the dera. His very company, the sattvic food and the spiritual environment at Sri Bhaini Sahib, would have a positive impact on them. Many turned over a new leaf. When such interventions did not transform some persons, he would admonish them by saying:

“Satguru will not visit your house.”

Usually, that was enough to cure them. For a Namdhari, that is the ultimate punishment.

VII

Patsha ji's love for sports and physical fitness is well known. As a child Patsha ji had learnt the value of physical activities and was a keen sportsman. Patsha ji played many games and his favourite games were football, badminton and hockey. During his youth, he was a good wrestler too. He loved cycling and would cycle long distances with friends on the pillion. Along with friends he would go trekking as he was very fond of spending time amidst Nature. Green trees, mountain ranges, lakes and rivers always attracted him.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji playing football

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji playing Chakar,
a Sikh martial art





Satguru Jagjit Singh ji at the playground





Patsha ji loved swimming and was an expert swimmer. One day he was travelling with his aide Sant Balkar Singh from Sri Bhaini Sahib to Gurusar. Just a mile to the destination, they saw a partially frozen canal. It was mid-winter and bitter cold winds were sweeping through. Before the aide could object, Patsha ji got out of the car and leapt into the water. He swam across the canal three times and after a while, suddenly dived into the water. A passerby shouted at the aide:

“Your companion will not survive this cold water, pull him out, light a fire and warm him.”

The worried aide stood helplessly.

After some time, Patsha ji stepped out of water, dried himself, put on his clothes and walked towards the car joyfully. With a puzzled look on his face, the man exclaimed:

“Do not know of what skin these people are made of.”

Patsha ji could never resist a good swim. He could become one with the elements of Nature which would do him no harm.

At Neelo Dera, he would climb up the mango trees on the banks of the canal and dive into the waters below. He could swim against the current even during the rainy season when the river was in full spate. Whenever he went to Bangkok, he would go to the beaches of Bang Saen and swim to his heart's content.

He promoted this love for sports and physical fitness in everyone. In later days when Patsha ji had to work round the clock, meeting people, holding discourses and performing seva, he used to find a little time to keep himself fit by playing badminton.

Patsha ji's grandson Jai Singh remembers that during long flights, Patsha ji would stand in the aisle of the aircraft and perform a few swift exercises.

At home, Patsha ji used to do quick pull-ups in the corridors as he waited for his aides to get ready with water for his bath. If Patsha ji noticed youngsters with a paunch, he would gently tap them on the stomach and say:

“You have to do something about it.”

Patsha ji was very careful about his diet. He was lean and elegant and was not overweight at any time in his life. His doctors said that the secret of his fast recovery after ailments even in advanced age was due to his disciplined lifestyle.

Dr Narinder Pal, cardiologist from Bangkok, who is one of those who has literally “seen” the heart of Satguru ji, said:

“After a major bypass surgery in Adelaide, Australia, on the third day Patsha ji was moving around and on the fourth day, he was going up and down the staircase. That was amazing because patients much younger to him in the hospital could not do so after they had undergone a similar operation.”

His Holiness was not only physically agile but also mentally alert. He had an inquisitive mind, ever ready to learn new facts and information. According to Dr G. L. Avasthi, Patsha ji's personal physician, Patsha ji believed in allopathy though he was not averse to other branches of medicine. Patsha ji would show newspaper

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji blessing
Thakur Uday Singh ji, the present Satguru



clippings of medical breakthroughs in naturopathy or alternative medicine to Dr Avasthi and ask him:

“Doctor Saheb, have you come across this new finding? What do you think about it?”

Dr. Avasthi says:

“As a patient, Patsha ji was open-minded and receptive. He was an extremely compliant patient and never created a fuss about anything.”

Very readily, he would allow the doctors to take as many blood samples as they required for testing as though he felt no pain.

But Mata Chand Kaur ji, Patsha ji’s wife, would complain:

“Why do you keep troubling Patsha ji by pricking him with needles?”

Patsha ji commanded respect from all doctors who met him at the hospital. Dr. Avasthi says:

“People would speak to him and would be charmed with his aura, charisma and attraction. We remember every moment we spent with him.”

It was the same in the Escorts Hospital, Delhi, where Satguru ji was treated by Dr. Naresh Trehan, Dr. T. S. Kler and Dr. Ashok Seth.

A striking feature of Satguru ji’s personality was his quest for perfection in everything he did - be it rolling a roti or composing a new bandish. He set an example by involving himself completely in any project he took up. While setting up and establishing Satguru Partap Singh Hospitals or Namdhari Farm in Bidadi, he would attend to minute details, monitor the progress, help to solve the problems and celebrate milestones met. He chose the right person for the projects and in the case of Namdhari Farm, he showered the credit of success on Thakur Uday Singh ji, now his worthy successor on the throne.

Patsha ji was fond of cars. He was a skilled driver who loved the challenge of difficult and tricky roads. He used to drive the vehicle very fast and raise a cloud of dust behind him on the mud tracks. When someone complained about this to Satguru Partap Singh ji, he advised Patsha ji not to drive beyond thirty kilometres per hour.

Music was his life force and passion. Patsha ji would sit for hours together singing, without a break. Music to him was like tapasya. He would forget hunger, thirst and sleep while singing. Patsha ji would sit cross-legged without moving, a true yogi who conquered the limitations of the body and existed at the level of the soul. When the aides suggested rest for some time, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji would say:

“Music does not tire me, it energizes me.”

When the music sessions were on, Satguru ji’s wife Mata Chand Kaur would sit for some time and listen to the music and later attend to seva at langar or construction. Even though Mata ji was not formally trained in music, her life and interests were so intertwined with Satguru Jagjit Singh ji’s vision and happiness that there was perfect harmony between the two. There was no scope for any discordant note. When asked about her likes and dislikes she replied:

“Whatever Satguru ji likes I like, whatever he dislikes, I dislike.”

Patsha ji promoted family values of care and concern. Whenever he found aged persons who needed attention, he would tell the members of their family:

“Send them to me and I will take care of them.”

This led to the establishment of the old age home at Sri Bhaini Sahib which provides happiness and comfort to many. He visited the seniors frequently and spent time with them, listening and comforting them.

VIII

Patsha ji considered everyone his family. In the evenings, he would meet members of the sangat, friends and family for an exchange of the day's happenings. These sessions would go on till late in the night and his wife Mata Chand Kaur ji would gently urge all those gathered to go home as Satguru ji had to get up early in the morning.

Patsha ji shared an affectionate bond with his younger brother Maharaj Bir Singh whom he called Ballo ji. During childhood, they spent a lot of time together in the usual play and pranks between brothers. While Ballo ji was a sensitive child, Beant ji was a cheerful one. They together learnt all activities such as horse riding, cycling and swimming. Music was a passion both the brothers shared till the end of their lives. Maharaj Bir Singh ji was a voracious reader too. Before Patsha ji ascended the throne, he used to share his meal with his brother. His Holiness regretted that he would not be able to have this pleasure when he assumed the gaddi.

Patsha ji, the avatar purush, hid his divine attributes from common eyes, and played the role of father, husband and grandfather as human life demanded. When his only child, Sahib Kaur, was born in 1962, he happily welcomed the girl child. He used to affectionately call her "Guddi" and bought dolls for her. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji said that his daughter heralded good days for the Namdhari community as all the civil cases which had been lodged against Satguru Partap Singh ji were proved false in the year she was born.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with daughter, Biba Sahib Kaur

Patsha ji got his daughter married to Sant Jagtar Singh ji in 1979. Someone asked Patsha ji:

“Satguru ji, is there any special celebration for the wedding of your daughter Sahib Kaur ji.”

Patsha ji smiled and said:

“It is like any other Anand Karaz. Nothing special, that is the speciality.”

Many years later, when people came to congratulate Satguru Jagjit Singh ji on the birth of Jai Singh, his grandson, Patsha ji told them:

“I will accept the wishes of only those who congratulated me at the birth of my daughter.” Patsha ji conveyed the message that one should not discriminate between a boy and a girl child.

Patsha ji was very fond of small children. He played hide-and-seek with his granddaughter Jai Kaur and grandson Jai Singh. They accompanied him during his travels to wildlife parks and other places.

Patsha ji relished the meals cooked by his wife Mata Chand Kaur ji and daughter-in-law Gursharan Kaur ji. Bibi Gursharan ji recalls how Patsha ji said to her:

“Bibi, learn to cook the vegetable pulao, Thailand style.”

IX

After massive strokes in 2000 and 2006, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji began to reduce his activities and spoke very little. It looked as if he voluntarily entered a zone of spiritual silence. During the last few years of his life Patsha ji used a wheelchair to move around. The benevolent Guru spent most of his time in reading the Gurbani, listening to music and blessing the sangat with his presence. He became more contemplative and inward-looking. He was fully conscious at the intellectual level. His mind was alert, even though he rarely spoke.

Gurmukh Singh said that during this phase of his life, when people visited Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, he would not talk much but smile and bless them. When Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Ashok Singhal ji paid a visit to Sri Bhaini Saheb, he requested Patsha ji for a message. Patsha ji was silent for a long time. When Ashok Singhal ji insisted, Patsha ji said:

“All parties should stop fighting and work for the nation.”

When Zakir Hussain, the tabla maestro, came to Sri Bhaini Sahib to seek the blessings of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji, the artiste played the tabla in Patsha ji's presence at the residence of His Holiness. Satguru ji silently showered his blessings on him. Even national leaders like Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Manmohan Singh ji, Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, L.K. Advani ji and leaders from Punjab such as Sardar Beant Singh ji and Parkash Singh Badal ji, held Patsha ji in high regard and sought his blessings.

The evening of this glorious life was gentle and beautiful. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji's wishes for the Namdhari sangat had been fulfilled. He had kept his word to his father and Satguru and had firmly set the Namdhari Sikhs on the path of spiritual and material prosperity. Patsha ji had once said:

“I do not want any Namdhari Sikh to be poor.”

In addition to the material prosperity, the community had arrived on the national and international scene.

Namdhari Sikhs excelled in all fields of life. The musicians groomed by Patsha ji made their mark internationally, Namdhari Hockey XI went on to become a brand name and members of the team made it to the Olympics. In the field of horticulture and agriculture, Namdhari Seeds reached the zenith. Satguru Partap Singh Hospitals, Ludhiana, provide healthcare to thousands of underprivileged who were so dear to Patsha ji's heart.

After leading a fruitful and pious life of fulfilment for 92 years, on 13 December 2012, Patsha ji shed the mortal coil.

For a while, it was difficult for the sangat to come to terms that their beloved Patsha ji was not physically present with them. Lakhs of mourners marched past the physical frame kept in Partap Mandir at Sri Bhaini Sahib and paid their last respects. A sea of humanity had come to have a final glimpse of the avatar purush who had guided them through their lives. The mournful music which reverberated in the hall found an echo in the hearts of the mourners who too wailed “Tu beant, tu beant...” - O Satguru, thou art immortal, thou art eternal.”

Indeed, this conqueror of hearts conquered death and lives on in the minds and hearts of his devotees and disciples.

As we come to the close of the saga of this great son of Bharat, let his words of wisdom reverberate in our ears and minds and guide us through life:

“Why are we born? What is the purpose of life? These are profound questions and their answers are only understood with the help of a Guru. A Satguru’s biggest benefaction to us is the blessing of naam which is essential for spiritual enlightenment.”

“Once, on a visit to a carpenter’s workshop, I witnessed the process of seasoning wood. The entire process is quite arduous and the wood goes through various severities. It is exposed to high temperatures and pressed multiple times to harden it... Eventually, the seasoned wood becomes so strong that it neither expands nor shrinks when exposed to extreme weathers. Similarly, when a Sikh seeks the sanctuary of his Satguru, his journey along the prescribed path shown by his Satguru can seem arduous. However, like the seasoned wood, he is liberated from vices such as lust, rage, greed, attachment and pride and is bestowed with virtues such as truthfulness, contentment and faith.”

“Namdharis are praised for their patriotism and their supreme sacrifices for the freedom of India. Let us pray to Almighty Lord that we remain as such...the Namdharis were able to lay down their lives for the freedom of their country because of the blessings of their Satguru Ram Singh ji. These blessings were the reason that they remained detached from worldly pleasures and attained spiritual enlightenment.” (Source: Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji: Discourses, Page 122-123)

As the holy words of the Gurbani describe:

ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਸਿਫਤੀ ਕਹਣਿ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ ॥

Ant na sifti kahan na ant.

Endless are His Praises, endless are those who speak them.

ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਕਰਣੈ ਦੇਣਿ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ ॥

Ant na karnai den na ant.

Endless are His Actions, endless are His Gifts.

ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਵੇਖਣਿ ਸੁਣਣਿ ਨ ਅੰਤੁ ॥

Ant na vekhan sunan na ant.

Endless is His Vision, endless is His Hearing.

ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਕਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਮੰਤੁ ॥

Ant na japai kia man mant.

His limits cannot be perceived. What is the Mystery of His Mind?

ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਕੀਤਾ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥

Ant na japai kita akar.

The limits of the created universe cannot be perceived.

ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ ॥

Ant na japai paravaar.

Its limits here and beyond cannot be perceived.

ਅੰਤ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਬਿਲਲਾਹਿ ॥

Ant karan kete billahi.

Many struggle to know His limits,

ਤਾ ਕੇ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

Ta ke ant na pae jahi.

but His limits cannot be found.

ਏਹੁ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

Ehu ant na janai koe.

No one can know these limits.

ਬਹੁਤਾ ਕਹੀਐ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

Bahuta kahiai bahuta hoe.

**The more you say about them,
the more there still remains to be said.**

ਵਡਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਉਚਾ ਥਾਉ ॥

vada sahib ucha thao.

Great is the Master, High is His Heavenly Home.

ਉਚੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਉਚਾ ਨਾਉ ॥

Uche upar ucha nao.

Highest of the High, above all is His Name.

ਏਵਡੁ ਉਚਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

Evad ucha hovai koe.

Only one as Great and as High as God

ਤਿਸੁ ਉਚੇ ਕਉ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

Tis uche kao janai soe.

Can know His Lofty and Exalted State.

ਜੇਵਡੁ ਆਪਿ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪਿ ਆਪਿ ॥

Jevad ap janai ap ap.

Only He Himself is that Great. He Himself knows Himself.

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਕਰਮੀ ਦਾਤਿ ॥

Nanak nadra karmi daat.

O Nanak, by His Glance of Grace, He bestows His Blessings.







Sri Mata Chand Kaur Ji

A Saga of Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji is incomplete without a glimpse into the noble life of his wife, Mata Chand Kaur ji. She was a symbol of seva, simran and sacrifice. Our humble pranams to the pious soul. Satguru Jagjit Singh ji and Mata Chand Kaur ji were like Shiva and Shakti, two divine powers, yet One. They were one soul in two bodies.

After Patsha ji merged with the light in 2012, the sangat found solace at the feet of Mata Chand Kaur ji. The day at Sri Bhaini Sahib dawned at her door. Early in the morning, devotees waited for her darshan. When she emerged out of her room to go to Asa di Vaar, the waiting devotees felt blessed by her appearance.

When I started work on this biography of Satguru Jagjit Singh ji in April 2015, I was fortunate to meet Mata ji at Sri Bhaini Sahib. As I entered her tiny room, I was struck by the austere simplicity.

Seated on a divan, she was surrounded by a group of devotees and relatives. Mata ji's grandson Jai Singh introduced me as the writer from Bangalore who would be writing a book on Patsha ji. She bestowed a graceful smile on me. I had expected to meet an old lady, withdrawn and quiet. On the contrary, Mata ji showed keen interest in what was going on. Even though we belonged to different cultural backgrounds and languages, it was not a barrier. Mata ji was very welcoming and we carried on the interview through interpreters.

She enjoyed the conversation and was very unassuming when others spoke about her seva and contribution to the sangat. They praised her capacity to inspire people to work together. Majestic buildings such as Ram Sarovar, Partap Mandir in Sri Bhaini Sahib stand testimony to her hard work and commitment.

Mata ji quoted her father-in-law, Satguru Partap Singh ji's advice:

“Bibi, Guru ghar di seva karo” and said that seva was her goal in life.

When I asked her:

“Mata ji, please speak on your likes and dislikes.”

The answer was straight and simple.

“Whatever Patsha ji liked, I like, whatever he disliked, I dislike.”

ਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਿ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜੋ ਰਹੈ ॥

Gur kai garihi sevak jo rahai.

That selfless Sikh, who lives in the Guru's household

ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਸਹੈ ॥

Gur ki agia man meh sahai.

Obeys the Guru's Commands with all his mind.

ਆਪਸ ਕਉ ਕਰਿ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਜਨਾਵੈ ॥

Apas kao kar kachh na janavai.

He who is humble

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਸਦ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥

Har har nam ridai sad dhiavai.

**He who meditates constantly
within his heart on the Name of the Lord.**

ਮਨੁ ਬੇਚੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

Man bechai satgur kai paas.

One who sells his mind to the True Guru

ਤਿਸੁ ਸੇਵਕ ਕੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਰਾਸਿ ॥

Tis sevak ke karaj raas.

Satguru takes care of such a Sikh and resolves all his matters.



Satguru Jagjit Singh ji and Mata Chand Kaur ji



Mata ji with daughter Biba Sahib Kaur

With her, there was no question of “I” or “Mine”, no separate entity, it was total merger and oneness with the Satguru. I realised that it is this submission and surrender to Satguru which empowered her.

At the end of the brief interaction, my preconceived notions of a very submissive and traditional woman disappeared. This matriarch, the mother of the entire Namdhari sangat was a strong woman who commanded respect and was a leader in her own right.

When Patsha ji was 25 years old, he lost his first wife, Mata Rajinder Kaur ji, daughter of S. Udham Singh of village Kalu Vahr, Hoshiarpur. After a year, Patsha ji’s father Satguru Partap Singh ji, decided to get him married again. Satguru Partap Singh ji spelled out his expectations of a woman who would marry his son:

“I want my daughter-in-law to serve the sangat. Her hands should be covered with the sand used to clean the plates of devotees at langar. She should seek satisfaction and salvation through serving people.”

Satguru Partap Singh ji found such a daughter-in-law in Mata Chand Kaur ji.

Mata Chand Kaur ji was born in 1932 as the eldest child of Sarwan Singh Siddhu and Mata Sama Kaur in the village of Buraj Tharor, Bhatinda, Punjab. Her maiden name was Kartar Kaur. She hailed from the family of agriculturists and even as a child was diligent and hard working. She grew up with her three brothers and two sisters and was trained in all household work. She had a religious bent of mind and in 1945, Kartar Kaur had come to Sri Bhaini Sahib to perform jap paryog. It was at this time that she caught the attention of Satguru Partap Singh ji who was happy to see the young girl sincerely involved in serving others.

Suba Inder Singh, the maternal uncle of Mata Sama Kaur suggested to Satguru Partap Singh ji that Kartar Kaur would make a worthy wife to his son Baba ji. Satguru Partap Singh ji who had seen the simple village girl performing seva, agreed to the proposal. The girl's family requested that the wedding be conducted at their relatives' village, Rodai, Punjab. Satguru Partap Singh ji conceded to the request and the wedding was performed in the village on 1st February, 1946.

An interesting episode is associated with the wedding. Satguru ji had issued strict orders that there should be no special celebrations at the wedding. Yet, two youngsters who wished to celebrate the occasion of Baba ji's marriage, burst some crackers. At this, Satguru Partap Singh ji lost his temper and fined the two offenders Rupees five each.

After the wedding, Satguru Partap Singh ji changed the name of the bride Kartar Kaur to Chand Kaur as the wife of Satguru ji's younger brother Maharaj Gurdial Singh ji was also Kartar Kaur. He felt that two women with the same name in one household could cause confusion. Satguru ji could not have chosen a better name. The bride was as beautiful as the full moon and complemented the life of Patsha ji just as the moon complements the sun in providing the light to the world.

The years 1946 and 1947 were days of political turmoil. Baba ji was involved in seva day and night, rehabilitating the refugees uprooted from Pakistan. Chand Kaur ji the new bride followed her husband to Sri Jiwan Nagar and joined hands in

serving the stream of refugees who poured into Sri Jiwan Nagar. She worked round-the-clock in the langar and construction sites. She did not hesitate to dirty her hands and clothes by working in the fields or laying roads. She assisted her husband in distributing food and clothes to the refugees.

The first thirteen years of her married life were dedicated to fulfilling the wish of her father-in-law. She immersed herself in serving the sangat. In 1959 when Patsha ji ascended the gaddi and assumed the responsibility as the supreme head of the Namdhari sangat, Mata Chand Kaur ji occupied the elevated role of the Mother of all Namdharis.

On 25th December, 1962, Mata Chand Kaur ji gave birth to a baby girl. The child was named Sahib Kaur. She brought cheer and happiness to the entire sangat.

As the fame and responsibilities of Patsha ji increased, Mata Chand Kaur ji began to share a lot of his burden, especially in the area of seva and construction of buildings at Sri Bhaini Sahib, Sri Jiwan Nagar, and Mastan Garh.

Satguru Jagjit Singh ji groomed Mata Chand Kaur ji into a fine leader who was an effective team player. She inspired others to work as she led by example and never shirked hard work.

Mata ji served the langar or the community kitchen for seventy long years.

When a project of Rupees fifty lakhs had to be completed, Satguru ji would give her seed money of Rupees five lakhs and ask her to get started. Mata Chand Kaur ji would never grumble or object. She was sure that with Patsha ji's blessings, she would be able to manage the funds. She also knew that Patsha ji would not brook any delay and His grace would always be there with her. She would discuss the project with her team and would launch it - the schools, residences and other buildings in Sri Bhaini Sahib were built this way.

Mata Chand Kaur ji took special interest in educating the young girls. She got them trained in tailoring, making mala, cooking and cattle rearing. Chanting of the Gurbani and scriptures too formed part of their education.

As the Satguru's wife, she travelled widely with Patsha ji and was very knowledgeable in matters of the world. Till her last breath, she actively directed and managed the running of the langar, old age home and cattlesheds.

Her faith in the healing power of prayers is well known. While Patsha ji religiously took whatever allopathic medicines were prescribed to him, Mata Chand Kaur ji would rely on home remedies and prayers and stealthily throw away the tablets given to her by the doctor.

Once at Mastan Garh where construction work was going on, some women told Mata ji that there was shortage of milk. She assured them that Satguru ji would bless them with so much of milk that it would be difficult for them to consume it. Within a few days, a buffalo yielding 20 kgs of milk was brought to Mastan Garh and Mata ji's words became true. Mata ji was herself fond of milk and loved to distribute milk and eatables to women and children. The elders at the old age home were also fortunate to enjoy her hospitality.

Mata ji was first and foremost a devout wife and disciple of Satguru ji. Her life was entirely devoted to serving her Guru and the sangat.

Mata ji led a very disciplined and austere life. Every day she would get up at three o'clock in the morning, take a head-to-toe bath and perform naam simran.

She performed yoga and was health conscious. She would take a walk around Ram Sarovar in the mornings.

Mata ji used to eat sparingly. Like Patsha ji, till 1991 she took only one meal a day. When Patsha ji started taking two meals a day as per the advice of the doctors, Mata ji too started having the second meal consisting of milk, vegetables and fruits.

Mata ji kept herself active throughout the day. She could perform non-stop seva for long hours. She would sit in the langar and supervise that everything went well. I was surprised to learn that Mata ji, at the age of eighty-five, used to

personally attend to details of furnishing the newly-constructed residence of the Guru at Sri Bhaini Sahib.

She would take care of the needs of the Sikhs and the families living at Sri Bhaini Sahib. She would visit the goshala and could be seen milking the cows.

Once when Mata ji suffered from fever, the doctor advised her to take bed rest. But Mata ji was seen working in the langar. When someone asked her why she was straining herself, Mata ji replied politely:

“I remain fit if I perform seva.”

Patsha ji said:

“My wife does lot of seva but does not advertise it.”

Sri Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was the sun and she was the moon whose life literally revolved around her husband, who was first her Guru. She, as a disciple and wife, received light from Him and reflected it on the community in the form of seva and compassion. The journey of this noble soul came to an end on 4th April, 2016 and the entire Namdhari sangat felt orphaned at her demise.

When the soul bride meets the Lord husband, that is God,

When the Ganges joins the Ocean, the story seems to end,

Separateness is over, but the saga continues to flow as one.







Mata ji at the old age home





Mata ji offering seva in the langar





Satguru Jagjit Singh ji with
Thakur Uday Singh ji as an infant



Mata Chand Kaur ji with
Thakur Uday Singh ji as an infant

Glossary

Abhaya hasta: The hand that protects

Ajaatashatru: The one without enemies

Akal Purakh: God, The Almighty

Akhand Paath: Uninterrupted reading of holy scriptures performed by a relay of readers

Akhand Varni: Uninterrupted repeated chanting of holy Naam

Amrit: Nectar of immortality, sweetened holy water used for baptising

Ardaas/Ardas: Formal supplication to God

Asa di Vaar: Morning congregational prayers

Ashram: A hermitage

Atithi devo bhava: The guest is equivalent to god

Avatar Purush: Holy incarnations like Lord Rama and Lord Krishna

Baani: The word of God - the works of the Gurus and other poets included in the Sikh scriptures

Baisakhi: Harvest festival in Punjab

Baithak: A meeting or a music session

Bandish: A composition in Hindustani vocal music

Basmati: Fragrant Indian rice

Beti: Daughter, a term of endearment

Bhakti: Devotion

Bhava: Emotion

Bhog: In Sikhism, it is used for observances that are fulfilled along with the reading of the concluding part of the Guru Granth Sahib Bikrmi Kattak Sudi

Ikadshi: The Bikrami calendar is named after king Vikramaditya and is lunar and solar. Kattak is mid October to mid November. Sudi means moonlit night; Ikadshi is the 11th day of each half of the month in the Vedic lunar calendar

Boondi: An Indian sweet made up of drops of deep fried chick pea flour and sugar syrup

Brahmopadesha: Initiating a male child with the sacred thread and the Gayatri mantra

Brindavan: A beautiful, pastoral land where Lord Krishna lived

Burfi: An Indian sweet made of milk and sugar

Chandi di Vaar: Chants in praise of Goddess Chandi composed by Guru Gobind ji

Charan: Holy feet of God or Satguru

Charpoy: Indian cot

Chor: A thief

Dal: Pulses or lentils

Darshan: A holy glimpse of God or Guru

Dasam Granth: The holy book written by the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh ji

Dastarbandi: The ritual of tying of the turban during the time when Satguru ascends the Gurgaddi or the throne in Namdhari Sikh religion

Daswand: One-tenth of one's earnings given in charity

Dera: A camp; dwelling place of a saint and his followers

Desi: Native

Dhamar: A song in Hindustani classical music set to Dhamar taal

Dhamaar: Folk songs

Dharamshala: Gurdwara, community shelters offering food and shelter

Dharma: The path of righteousness and truth

Dholak: Small drums

Dhrupad: The most ancient form of Hindustani classical music

Dilruba: A traditional stringed instrument played with a bow used in Hindustani devotional music

Divan: A low wooden cot

Diwan: Evening kirtan

Five ‘Ks’: In Sikhism, the Five ‘Ks’ indicate the five items that Guru Gobind Singh commanded Khalsa Sikhs to wear always. They are: Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (a wooden brush), Kara (a metal bracelet), Kachera (a type of undergarment) and Kirpan (a sword) Gandharva Nagari: A celestial city Ghadva: A pot to carry water for ablutions; a symbol of Namdhari maryada (norms)

Gharaana/Gharana: School of Hindustani music

Go Puja: Worship of the cow

Go Seva: Serving the cow

Gopala: Another name of Lord Krishna, the cowherd

Goshaala/Goshala: Shelter for cows

Gurbani: The words of the Guru Granth Sahib and Sri Dasam Granth Sahib

Gurdwara: The holy shrine of the Sikhs for worship

Gurmat Sangeet: Singing and performing of devotional music in accordance with the teachings of Sikh gurus

Guru: A spiritual guide, an enlightened soul who shows the path of Deliverance to his disciples; A spiritual head, dispels darkness and provides knowledge

Guru Dakshina: Offerings to the Guru given by a disciple at the end of learning as a token of gratitude

Gur Gaddi: The holy throne or seat of the Guru indicating his spiritual power

Guru Granth Sahib: The holy book of the Sikhs

Guru Parampara: Lineage of Gurus

Guru Shishya Parampara: The lineage of gurus and disciples

Gursikh: A disciple who surrenders himself to the Guru

Havan Yajna: A religious ritual, fire ceremony

Hola Mela/Mohalla: A religious festival celebrated by Sikhs during Holi, the festival of colours

Hukamnama/Hukumnama: A letter of command, document containing a request or command issued by the Guru to an individual or sangat

Imam: A Muslim priest or clergyman

Istree Vidyak Jatha: Women's association

Jalebi: A deep fried sweet made of batter and sugar syrup

Janam: Birth

Jap mala/mala: White homespun rosary with 108 beads.

Jap Paryog: A month-long meditation, performed by all Namdhari Sikhs, praying for the darshan of Satguru Ram Singh ji.

Jap: Meditation

Jas Jivan: A chronological diary of Satguru Partap Singh ji written by Taran Singh Vehmi

Jatha: An association

Jeeva: A living being

Jyoti: Divine Light

Kaala Paani: Literally, “black waters”, referred originally to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands where the British imperialists sent those who fought for India's Independence. A place from which none can return alive. Many Namdhari patriots during the days of Satguru Ram Singh ji were deported to the Andamans

Kaam: Lust

Kabaddi: a traditional Indian team game

Kachera: An undergarment, one of the five compulsory “K”s a Sikh must have on his person

Kaliyug: According to Hindu mythology, the duration of the world is divided into four periods: Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali. Kaliyug is the last among them. It is a period of more vices and less virtues

Karmabhoomi: The place of action, where one discharges one’s duty

Karmayogi: Person who performs selfless action

Karonda: A tree which bears berries

Khadi: Handspun cloth usually made of cotton, using a charkha

Khalsa: Collective body of initiated Sikhs

Khayaal/Khayal: A style of singing in Hindustani music which is more free and flexible than traditional compositions

Khuda: The Almighty

Khunda: Long stick hooked at the top

Kikar: A type of acacia tree, which grows abundantly all over India

Kirpa: Blessings

Kirtan: Religious song

Kothi: House

Krodh: Anger

Kurta and Pyjama: Indian shirt and trousers

Laddu: Ball shaped sweets made of flour, sugar and other ingredients

Langar: Community kitchen in the Gurdwara

Lassi: Sweet or salty buttermilk

Lavan: Hymns sung during Anand Karaz, wedding ceremony

Lobh: Greed

Loh: Iron plate for roasting chapatis

Maargadarshak: One who shows the way

Madha: Arrogance

Maghar: Ninth month of Nanakshahi calendar, starts on 14th November

Mahaan Kosh: Punjabi language encyclopedia, compiled by Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha

Maryada: Norms codified by the Gurus for the Namdharis to follow

Maund: A measure for grains; one “maund” equals 37 kg in British India

Maya: Money or that which is transient

Moh: Attachment

Murabba: Measure of land. One “murabba” equals 25 acres.

Murga: A hen

Naam: The Lord’s name

Naam Simran: Devotional practice of meditating on the Lord’s name

Namdhari Darbar: Advisory body of Namdhari community

Neelgai: The “blue bull”, an ox-like wild animal commonly seen in the farmlands and scrub forests of North India

Nitnem: The daily prayer routine for a Sikh

Paada Sparsha: Paying respect to the holy feet

Paan: Arecanut and spices rolled up in betel leaves, eaten as a digestive

Paath: Readings of scriptures

Pakhawaj Jori: Traditional Indian percussion musical instrument

Panchayat: Local body for self governance at the village level

Pandal: A temporary shelter installed for organising public functions

Panth: The Sikh community

Paripoorna: A person with no blemish, an embodiment of perfection

Parsad: Food that has been offered to the Gods and the blessed food is distributed to devotees

Patandar: An expression to describe someone naughty and affectionate

Patsha: An emperor; Namdharis Sikhs refer to their Satguru by this term

Pranaam: Salutations

Puja: Worship of God

Raag: A melodic tune to which musical compositions are set

Raagi: A singer of Sikh scriptures

Rabab: A traditional lute-like stringed musical instrument

Rababi: One who plays the rabab

Rafji: A holy man

Sache Patsha: The true emperor, the Guru

Sadhana: Spiritual practice

Sadh Sangat: Congregation of saints

Sadhu: A person of saintly qualities

Sahiwaal, Tharparkar, Haryana, Nagauri: Breeds of Indian cows

Samarpit: Dedicated and surrendered to Satguru or God

Sammelan: A conference

Sangat: A community

Sangeet Sabha: An assembly of musicians

Sant: A holy man

Santoor: A stringed instrument used in Hindustani classical music

- Saranda:** A three-stringed Indian folk musical instrument with a bow, similar to lutes or fiddles
- Sarangi:** An instrument with bow and string used in Hindustani music
- Sarab Kala Samrath:** Master of all arts
- Sarbat da Bhala:** Good of all
- Sarod:** A traditional stringed instrument used in Hindustani music
- Sarvam Brahmamayam:** Everything is a manifestation of the Almighty
- Sat Sri Akaal:** A Sikh greeting, which means “God is the only truth.”
- Satguru:** The true supreme Guru who guides his disciples to spiritual enlightenment and liberation
- Satjug:** A weekly newspaper published by the Namdhari Darbar
- Sattvic food:** Vegetarian food that is pure, natural, vital and energy-giving
- Seva:** Selfless service, work rendered with no expectation of any reward
- Sevak:** Attendants
- Shabad:** The Word (of the Gurbani)
- Shehnai:** A musical instrument played at marriages and other ceremonies in North India
- Shishya:** A disciple
- Shriman:** An honorific term used to address a man
- Sikhi:** The path of a Sikh, set by the Satguru
- Simran:** The constant chanting of naam with a focus on God
- Sitar:** A stringed instrument used in Hindustani classical music
- Snaan:** A bath
- Sodh/Shodh:** A code of practice prescribed by the Satguru to promote selfdiscipline and spirituality
- Suba:** A person who is in charge of a province and is appointed by the Namdhari Satguru to carry out duties and responsibilities related to the Namdhari sangat

Sufi: A follower of Sufism, mystical dimension of Islam

Taal: Beat to which Indian classical music is set

Taar shehnai: An Indian bow instrument similar to the shehnai, an Indian reed instrument.

Tabla: A percussion instrument used in Hindustani music

Tangli: A winnowing basket

Tapasya: Penance

Theka: Punjabi rhythmic music

Thumri: Devotional or romantic music sung in Awadhi or Brij Bhasha in Hindustani music

Tibba: A sand dune

Updesh: A religious discourse

Ustad: An honorific title used for a person skilled in the chosen field

Vadda Kaka: Elder son

Vaidyo Narayano Harihi: God is the healer

Vidyak Jatha: Students association

Vidyalya: School

Yogi: A mystical person

Yuvak Jatha: Youth association



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An ocean of love, compassion and peace, Satguru Jagjit Singh ji was a true conqueror in more than one sense. He was a Spiritual Master, who conquered the limitations of the body and mind to commune with the Omnipotent; a Master whose heart responded to the call of a tiny bird and the voice of a mighty ruler; a Master who walked the way He showed; a Master who could bring rain to parched land; one who could bring solace to the sick and dying with His healing touch and soothing words. Where can we find another Master like Him?

A SAGA OF SRI SATGURU JAGJIT SINGH JI

